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FEBRUARY 19, 2001

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HOW THE NEW ECONOMY TURNED OUT TO BE JUST LIKE THE OLD ECONOMY

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts

WASHINGTON, D.C.
FEBRUARY 19, 2001
ISSUE 4,492

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THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 224, Number 8, Issue 4,492, February 19, 2001. (Printed in the United States on February 7, 2001.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated January 1 & 8, April 9 & 16, July 9 & 16, August 27 & September 3, 2001 and December 31, 2001 & January 7, 2002) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. For advertising inquiries, please contact Ann Rossaki at (202) 331-7494 or our NY sales office at (212) 924-8700. Yearly subscriptions, $59.94; foreign, $99.94 (U.S. funds); Canada, $79.94 (U.S. funds). Back issues, $4.00 (includes postage & handling). **© 2001 by The New Republic, Inc.** **(ISSN 0028-6583). Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Rights and permissions: fax (202) 331-0275. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, Canadian Periodical Index, CD-ROM, issue, and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Postmaster: Send changes of address to The New Republic, P.O. Box 37298, Boone, IA 50037-0298. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope (e-mail address: tnr@aol.com). For subscription inquiries or problems call 1-800-827-1289 or visit our website at www.thenewrepublic.com.**

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CORRESPONDENCE

Clinton fatigue

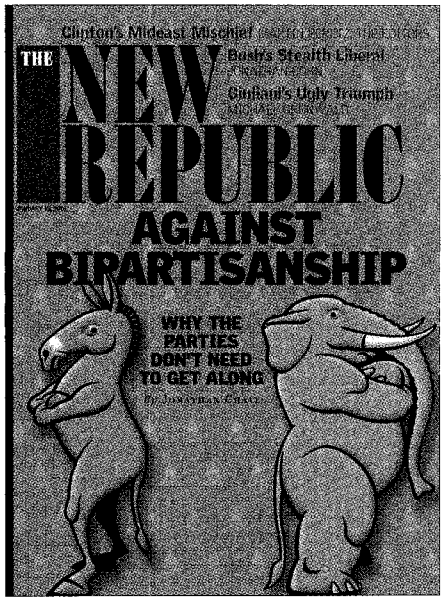
TO THE EDITORS:
Martin Peretz hit the bull's-eye in demolishing the myth that Bill Clinton is Israel's best friend ever ("Good to Go," January 15). In fact, it may be argued that this president has done more harm to Israel's long-term security than any other American chief executive. Under his most recent proposals, Israel would retreat to indefensible borders, thereby reducing Israel to a strategic burden, rather than an asset, for the United States. This, unfortunately, could be the legacy of Clinton's flawed presidency.

MORRIS AMITAY
Vice Chairman
Jewish Institute for
National Security Affairs
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITORS:
Martin Peretz ends his article on President Clinton's involvement with Israel and the Palestinians by including his opinion: "[Clinton] does not want to endanger Israel. He almost certainly thinks that the perils of potential war are more fearsome than the vagaries of a risky peace. He is a 'give peace a chance' politician." After all Peretz has written and all he has concluded about Clinton, he seems not yet to understand Clinton and his motives. President Clinton cares not a thing about Israel, or the Palestinians, or war, or peace. President Clinton cares only about President Clinton. If you recognize that simple premise, all of his actions are clearly and easily predictable.

PAUL RUDOLPH
Coralville, Iowa

TO THE EDITORS:
About Christian Palestinians, Martin Peretz states that, "as Christians, they have nothing to fear from the Israelis." I have friends who are Christian and live in a mainly Christian village in the West Bank. Their main roads are blocked with huge boulders so they cannot leave, just as Muslim village roads are blocked. They have not been able to get to work outside their village for months, just as Muslim Palestinians have not. They are stopped daily and questioned, just as Muslim Palestinians are. Their homes, schools, churches, and parks are damaged by rockets when a few outsiders use the village as a place to stage trouble, just as in Muslim villages. Their children are scared, have friends whose homes have been destroyed, and know of neighbors who have been killed, just as in Muslim villages. Peretz asks why the Christian Palestinian leaders support



the Muslim Palestinians. Because the Israelis treat them exactly as they do the Muslim Palestinians. This alliance should not seem so mysterious—it is something the Israelis themselves have created.

KATHLEEN KREUTZER
Chesterfield, Virginia

Homeward bound

TO THE EDITORS:
According to Andrew Sullivan, the departure of the Clintons from Washington will finally allow the nation to distance itself from "their hideous sexual embarrassments paraded as high principle" and the "erosion of the boundaries between the public and private" that they apparently engendered ("Sounds of Silence," January 15). Has Sullivan forgotten that it was the Republicans (including such moral paragons as the ultra-hypocritical Henry Hyde) who, more than anyone, worked to drag private affairs into the political arena?

JIM NAWROCKI
San Francisco, California

Soul searching

TO THE EDITORS:
Ruth Franklin's "Personal Best" (January 15) reminded me of something that Anatole France wrote more than a century ago in *La Vie Litteraire*: "The good critic is he who relates the adventures of his soul among masterpieces.... To be quite frank, the critic ought to say: 'Gentlemen, I am going to talk about myself on the subject of Shakespeare, or Racine, or Pascal, or Goethe—subjects that offer me a beautiful opportunity.'" Franklin is correct to defend the adventures of Derrida's soul among masterpieces (whether or not one agrees with his conclusions), just as she is right to criticize academics for unashamedly "airing personal histories, secrets, and fantasies." It would seem that some intellectuals have simply confused the great and humbling adventure of literature with the excitement of appearing on "Oprah." One can only hope that these academics might realize their mistake and find, as France said in the same essay, "the strength to be silent."

JULIE HAGEDORN
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Fear matters

TO THE EDITORS:
In his essay on New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, Michael Grunwald asks, "Does it really matter if leadership based on fear breeds resentment, if it also breeds a functioning civil society?" ("Cruel to Be Kind," January 15). Benito Mussolini, we are told, made the Italian trains run on time. It mattered.

AARON H. ESMAN, M.D.
New York, New York

Still interrupted

TO THE EDITORS:
Christine Stansell says Brenda Feigen's and Ruth Bader Ginsburg's work in 1973's *Frontiero* v. *Richardson* was "a landmark in subjecting sexual discrimination to strict scrutiny" ("Girlie, Interrupted," January 15). *Frontiero* was a landmark, but your readers could mistakenly conclude that it resolved the issue long ago. *Frontiero* was a plurality opinion and was persuasive only, not binding. No Supreme Court majority has ever agreed that strict scrutiny applies to gender-based claims; they merit a lesser, "intermediate" scrutiny. Almost 30 years later, Ginsburg is still fighting the same battle. Writing for the majority in 1996's *Virginia Military Institute* case, Ginsburg used "skeptical scrutiny" to knock down an all-male enrollment policy because there was no "exceedingly persuasive" reason for it. Although that wording probably does not grant strict scrutiny to gender claims, it's another step on the long road to equality. It's inspiring to see second-wave feminists like Ginsburg still passionately committed after all these years. But it also ought to serve as a reality check for women of the *Manifesta* authors' generation: The many life paths they stroll down so exuberantly and boldly are, indeed, still under construction. Anytime those "girlie" third-wavers want to help with the heavy lifting, they'll be welcomed.

KATHLEEN E. LYON
Chevy Chase, Maryland

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President Bush Offers Hope for Better Drug Policies

On January 18th, 2001 President Bush said:

"One of the things that we have got to make sure of in our society is that our drug-prevention programs are effective."

"A lot of people are coming to the realization that . . . long minimum sentences for the first-time users may not be the best way to occupy jail space or heal people from their disease. And I'm willing to look at that."

"[The discrepancy in sentencing between crack and powder cocaine] ought to be addressed by making sure the powder-cocaine and the crack-cocaine penalties are the same. I don't believe we ought to be discriminatory."

"One of the things we've got to do a better job of in our society is helping people cure themselves of an illness. Addiction to alcohol or addiction to drugs is an illness. And we haven't done a very good job, thus far, of curing people from that illness."

"I am absolutely opposed to racial profiling. . . I think most Americans are opposed to racial profiling. The best way to get at the root . . . is to first understand if it exists. The federal government can help collect the data necessary to make the right choice."

CNN, Inside Politics, January 18, 2001.

Will President Bush lead us from drug policies often of ignorance and opportunism to just approaches based upon peer reviewed research and decency?

Kevin B. Zeese, President, Common Sense for Drug Policy
For more information contact Common Sense for Drug Policy, 3220 "N" Street, NW, #141, Washington, D.C. 20007 or at info@csdp.org and 703-354-9050

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Endgame

AT SOME POINT you have to wonder who still takes Jesse Jackson seriously. This is an old, old story, of course, given new piquancy by his nimble pirouettes over a recently conceived illegitimate child. But the fact that he remains in public life, that he still commands respect from many quarters, that his words actually matter in the national discourse, is, on the face of it, incredible. No comparable figure would have survived the scandals, sleaze, failure, and sheer nonsense that have trailed Jackson over the years as tenaciously as the TV cameras. If he were white, he would have about as much prominence in national life as Jimmy Swaggart. Yet he endures and thrives, raking in vast fortunes from corporate America, betraying his family, casting racial aspersions on anyone with whom he disagrees, and inveigling his offspring in the corrupt and corrupting operation he laughably calls the Citizenship Education Fund (CEF).

Jackson's greatest betrayal, of course, is to the cause of civil rights. He once played a small but energetic role in the civil rights movement. But his actions in the last 20 years have trivialized its moral salience and dented its prestige. Unable to reconcile himself to the strides made in the political and civil equality of black Americans, Jackson has perpetuated the lie of permanent black victimhood, whatever the context. For Jackson, it is forever 1965. The expulsion of a few teenage thugs from a school in Decatur, Illinois, is the equivalent of Selma. So is economic stress in central Connecticut, a meat packers' strike in Minnesota, budget cuts in New York state, and, of course, *Chocolat*—a whimsical film about candy-making that, Jackson told *The New York Times*, "is really about us going to Birmingham to get the right to vote."

Similarly, the last election. A confusing ballot in Palm Beach, Florida, devised by a Democratic official in a misguided attempt to make it easier for elderly voters, was not a tragic error, a misfortune, a goof. It was equivalent in Jackson's eyes to the systematic and deliberate disenfranchisement of Southern blacks for two centuries. "We marched too much, bled too profusely, and died too young. We must not surrender," he said in West Palm Beach. "We will not let democracy down. We will stand tall." Even if you believe the Palm Beach ballot was a travesty of voting fairness, the comparison to Selma is worse than hyperbole. If Jackson believes it, he's simply unhinged. If he doesn't believe it, he's a trivializer of the very cause he once espoused.

The shaky finances and poor organization of his once-vaunted Rainbow/PUSH Coalition are equally a matter of public record. Mark Hosenball effectively uncovered them in this magazine more than twelve years ago. But in recent years the excesses have grown even worse. The *Chicago Sun-Times* reported last Sunday on a whole litany of questionable donations to Jackson's sister organization, CEF. Public tax returns show that CEF saw its income soar from $2 million in 1998 to almost $10 million in 1999. Most of this money came from big corporations whose proposed mergers Jackson initially protested to the Federal Communications Commission. In 1998, for example, Jackson opposed the SBC-Ameritech merger, lobbying President Clinton and the FCC to block the deal unless the companies became more minority-friendly. SBC-Ameritech subsequently kicked in $500,000 to CEF, pledged to hire a minority firm to run its pension fund, and sold its cellular business to a group headed by Chester Davenport, a colleague of Jackson's. Jackson waived his objection to the merger, and, last February, Jackson's son Jonathan represented Davenport's company on a trip to Africa. (For good measure, Jonathan also heads up CEF and, with his brother Yusef, has a 90 percent stake in a lucrative Anheuser-Busch distribution company in Illinois. His father once boycotted Anheuser-Busch as alleged racists. Jonathan won't say how many minority workers his own company now employs.)

Jackson tried the same gambit on the proposed GTE-Bell Atlantic merger. The merger had to "include a stronger commitment to Internet and technology training targeted to the minority community," Jackson argued to the FCC. The companies chipped in a cool $1 million to CEF and gave Davenport a 7 percent share in the new $3.3 billion venture for just $60 million; and Jackson called off the dogs. The result was Verizon—and one reason your telephone bills are high is that you're paying to make Jackson's rich friends even richer. There are several other, similar deals behind CEF's recent windfalls. The *Sun-Times* has no smoking gun, but the entire process reeks of shake-down—an accusation that has followed Jackson for decades.

It becomes even sketchier when you consider that the roughly $35,000 "moving expenses" paid to Jackson's lover came directly out of tax-exempt CEF's operating budget. Jackson has been given an extraordinary pass by the press for his sexual relationship with an employee and the use of tax-exempt funds to move her across the country and help buy her a house in Los Angeles. (An honorable exception was *Time*'s columnist Jack E. White.) *The New York Times* buried the story and declined to editorialize on the matter at all. Some journalists have even credited him with taking responsibility—as if paying off a mistress with someone else's money is the definition of responsibility! But the issue here is not human frailty. It's not, to coin a phrase, about sex. It's about abuse of authority in the workplace (by having sex with a younger woman who owed him her job); hypocrisy (since Jackson has long preached—yes, preached—about the need for African Americans to restore the fabric of the family); gall (since he even brought his young lover with him to meet President Clinton); lying (Jackson explicitly denied the charge of fatherhood when it was first raised); abuse of taxpayers' money (the illicit use of publicly subsidized funds for a private purpose); and shamelessness. (Jackson's "retirement" from public life lasted a full three days before he announced himself redeemed. Last weekend, he was even in a pulpit again!)

It's unthinkable, isn't it, that a similar white figure, or black figure on the right, could get away with this. Imagine if Jerry Falwell or J. C. Watts had an illegitimate child and paid the mother using tax-exempt funds to keep her happy. There would be hell to pay: op-eds everywhere, cover stories in the news magazines, hand-wringing on NPR. But Jackson keeps on going, spewing accusations of racism at any critic, white or black, drawing sustenance from a black population that seems to have mistaken forgiveness for sanction, redemption for regrouping. But the bald truth is that Jackson is a joke and a fraud and a menace. No one should invite him on television again, and no corporation should do business with him. He should return the $35,000 to CEF, pay for his mistress and child out of his own pocket, and leave public life at the earliest opportunity for good.

It's been true for 20 years now, but surely it's never been as true as it is now. It is time—way past time—for him to go.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

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What's Wrong with Day Care?

Day Care has Unknown Effects

There have been no studies of the effect of day care on adult character.

Studies of the Israeli kibbutz and of the changing American character suggest that day care may produce adults who have little inner life, little capacity for intimacy, and no commitment to ideas or ideals.

Universal preschool would cause unknown changes in the character of an entire generation. **We should support a diversity of child-raising methods**.

Day Care Funding is Unfair

Federal and State tax laws support people who pay for day care. They give nothing to people who work shorter hours so they can care for their own children.

Wealthy two-income families get a federal tax credit to help pay for day care, and they can shelter $5,000 in income from taxes. **But if a family sacrifices half its income to care for its own children, it gets no tax benefit.**

Half of the day care tax credit goes to the wealthiest 30% of families. Only 3% goes to the poorest 30%.

Day Care is a Byproduct of the Consumer Economy

A half-century ago, the typical family was supported by a man working a forty-hour week. When women entered the workforce, we could have shortened work hours, so both men and women could work and have time for their families. Instead, we stimulated the economy to create more jobs, so **the typical family today works an eighty-hour week.**

What would Americans of the 1920s have thought if they heard that, after all our economic progress, a typical family today can afford two cars – but it cannot afford to cut back on work to care for its own preschool children?

We Need Fair Funding and More Funding for Child Care

In America today, work schedules have absolute priority over family schedules. The following policies would let parents balance work and family:

- **Fair Funding:** The child care tax credit should go to all low and middle income families with pre-school children – not just to those who use day care
- **More Funding:** The child care tax credit is not high enough to help people who need day care or to help people who want to work shorter hours and care for their own children. It should be increased.
- **Choice of Work Hours:** There should be incentives for businesses to let parents work part-time, with equivalent pay and benefits.

These policies would give parents the option of down-shifting economically. Surveys show that 65% to 80% of Americans would choose to consume less, work less, and have more time for their children.

Restore the Balance between the Economy and the Family

You can help. You can go to our world wide web site at **www.restorethebalance.com** to:

- Get more information about our campaign to restore the balance between the economy and the family.
- Send an e-mail form letter to President Bush backing fair funding and more funding for child care.
- **Buy the new book *What's Wrong With Day Care*** by Charles Siegel, foreword by Christopher Lasch, Teachers College Press.

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Where We Stand

A commentary on public education and other critical issues

An Overdue Verdict

By SANDRA FELDMAN, President
American Federation of Teachers

Several weeks ago, New York State Supreme Court Justice Leland DeGrasse rendered a sweeping decision ordering the state to provide adequate funding for a "sound, basic" education for the children in New York City's public schools.

In a detailed, forceful decision, Justice DeGrasse defined what he means, using criteria such as the number of qualified teachers, class size, and whether there are sufficient classroom supplies. He laid out an argument that started with the U.S. Supreme Court's 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, which called education "the very foundation of good citizenship," and he went on to order a wholesale change in the formula the state uses to distribute school funding.

Justice DeGrasse argued that the failure to provide an opportunity for a sound, basic education to New York City students also constituted "unjustified disparate impact on minority students" and said the state was violating both state and federal law.

In defining what a "sound, basic" education means today, Justice DeGrasse took as an example what is required for a citizen to serve competently on a jury. Jurors today, he said, may have to determine questions of fact involving "DNA evidence, statistical analyses, and convoluted financial fraud, to name only three topics."

A Problem That Must Be Solved

He also emphasized that the New York City schools—which do remarkably well considering their conditions—have the largest numbers of unqualified teachers in the state and the lowest salaries in the region, which he defined, in no uncertain terms, as a major problem that has to be solved.

New York's governor, George Pataki, who has called the New York State educational funding formula a "dinosaur," has decided to appeal. But the die is cast.

Those who supported the suit—parents, the teachers' union, civil rights groups, and lawyers, including one of the city's top corporate firms, which did years of pro bono work on it—were ecstatic.

The responses of children asked by the *New York Times* to write essays on what they would do if enough resources were available said it all. One fifth grader said she'd use them for a "supply store" because some kids don't have any school supplies. Another said, "I would improve my school by buying computers." A third wanted "more teachers for art, reading, and math."

The school funding verdict recognizes that *all* kids have a right to learn.

Eighth graders called for new schools to relieve overcrowding or redesigned buildings and "stimulating" after-school activities. One eleventh grader talked about "laboratory classrooms with proper equipment and simply enough chairs for all students." Others called for smaller classes and more teachers.

The kids were very practical; their wish lists, heartbreaking.

The arguments that the plaintiffs made are not new. We've heard them all before in other court cases and in countless efforts by parents and teachers to obtain more equitable school funding. There is greater urgency now because of the commitment to higher standards and new, state-imposed requirements of accountability to meet them.

The standards and accountability approach to reforming education still has many problems and much that needs to be corrected. But one thing is sure: It has made plain and transparent the need for resources—spent wisely—to improve the low-performing schools too many poor children attend.

The Wisdom of Children

The New York City decision is one of many examples of efforts to revamp school funding across the country, several of which have already reached fruition. Some originated as court suits; others stem from the challenge of higher standards and accountability required by the state or the federal government. A number—for example, those in New Jersey, Connecticut, Kentucky, and Texas, now joined by New York—have concerned themselves especially with the needs of underfunded districts.

All of this is long overdue. And there isn't any more time to waste in political squabbles. Across the country, the American people have made clear they want their schools improved—all their schools. They want poor children, immigrant children, black and Latino children also to be provided with what they need in school to become productive citizens, and they're willing to pay for that.

Yes, they want their money to be spent wisely, on what works. And for that we can look not only to the thoughtful, careful blueprint laid out by Justice DeGrasse but to the wisdom of the children themselves who, as their *New York Times* essays showed, can clearly see the advantages that others enjoy and that they are missing. ▮

***Where We Stand* is published once every month in *The New Republic*. To comment, write to Sandra Feldman, AFT, 555 New Jersey Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20001.** **© Sandra Feldman 2001.** **Visit our web site (http://www.aft.org).**

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Landslide

WHO, REALLY, CANNOT grasp what brought the fierce, ominous Ariel Sharon to power? To understand is certainly not to forgive; but the result of a democratic election is anyway not a proper object of forgiveness. It is a proper object of respect. Even Yasir Arafat recognized this, when he reacted to the landslide in Israel by announcing, "We respect the decision of the Israeli people." We do not expect that his rhetorical restraint will be matched by many Palestinians, or by many commentators. But hysteria is exactly the wrong response: It merely adds another inflammation to the inflamed reality in which this extraordinary event came to pass. Better, certainly, to understand it, since it is a measure of what is possible and what is impossible between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Peace is *not* what is impossible. But peace, if it is to be genuine, must be fashioned by peoples, not by diplomats; and the Palestinian insurrection of recent months has demonstrated to many Israelis (and to us) that the Palestinians do not want peace, if it calls for compromise and the renunciation of their precious anger. It will take a certain temerity on the part of the radicals in Palestine—who now comprise most of the Palestinian leadership, religious and secular—to argue that it is Sharon who scuttled the momentous opportunity. For the cold fact is that Ehud Barak offered the Palestinians a sovereign state on territory that was the equivalent of a return to the 1949 borders, with a capital in Jerusalem, and the Palestinians turned him down. More, they responded to his almost perversely magnanimous offer with violence.

In this way, the Palestinians elected Ariel Sharon the prime minister of Israel. They convinced an astonishing number of Israelis—Sharon beat Barak 62 percent to 37 percent, with 30 percent of those who voted for Barak in 1999 now voting for Sharon—that Barak's way was bankrupt. It was bankrupt because it had no counterpart on the other side, and because it was autocratically conceived and implemented, and because it treated the *amour-propre* of Israel (no sovereignty on the Temple Mount!) haughtily and the requirements of Israeli safety (no Israeli troops in the Jordan Valley!) sloppily. When historians come to write the story of Barak's brief and dizzy rule, they will record that he was the man who broke many of the taboos, and thereby demonstrated that some of the taboos could not be broken, and should not be broken.

It is easy to rejoice at the fall of the reckless dove, even if it is not easy to rejoice at the rise of the reckless hawk. We harbor no illusions about Ariel Sharon. He is an adorer of force, and in his long career he has been the author of some very repellent deeds. He protests that he believes in Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation, but he has not so far displayed a skill for it. But Sharon's victory represents also a useful articulation of the limits of Israeli flexibility, a return to a sturdier sort of Israeli vigilance. The Likud's constituency alone cannot account for the magnitude of Sharon's success at the polls. He owes his landslide to the indignation of many centrist and liberal Israelis that their land was sliding.

It is important also to remember that Sharon's victory comes at a time of great strategic bleakness for Israel. The peace process has been destroyed at the bargaining table and in the streets, and there is poison in the air. The complexion of Palestinian political culture has changed: Fatah has been increasingly usurped by the theocrat-terrorists, and a growing number of Palestinians seek to emulate Hezbollah, which has transformed itself in Lebanon from a crude extremism into a sophisticated extremism. The Arab states are retreating from their cordiality to Israel, and muttering the old belligerent language of pan-Arabism. And most disturbingly, Iraq is stirring. Owing to the criminal indifference of Bill Clinton and Kofi Annan, Iraq is reconstituting its mass-destruction arsenal, which we know from experience that it is prepared to use; the French, the Russians, the Venezuelans, and others are flying into Baghdad and winking the sanctions away; and Saddam Hussein is advancing himself to a new prominence in the Arab world by reviving a virulent anti-Zionism and paying Palestinian families money for their "martyred" children. In sum: The skepticism of many Israelis about a brave new Middle Eastern world has a cheerless foundation in reality. In electing Ariel Sharon, they (or many of them) are not being ugly. They are being careful. We hope that he is careful, too. ■

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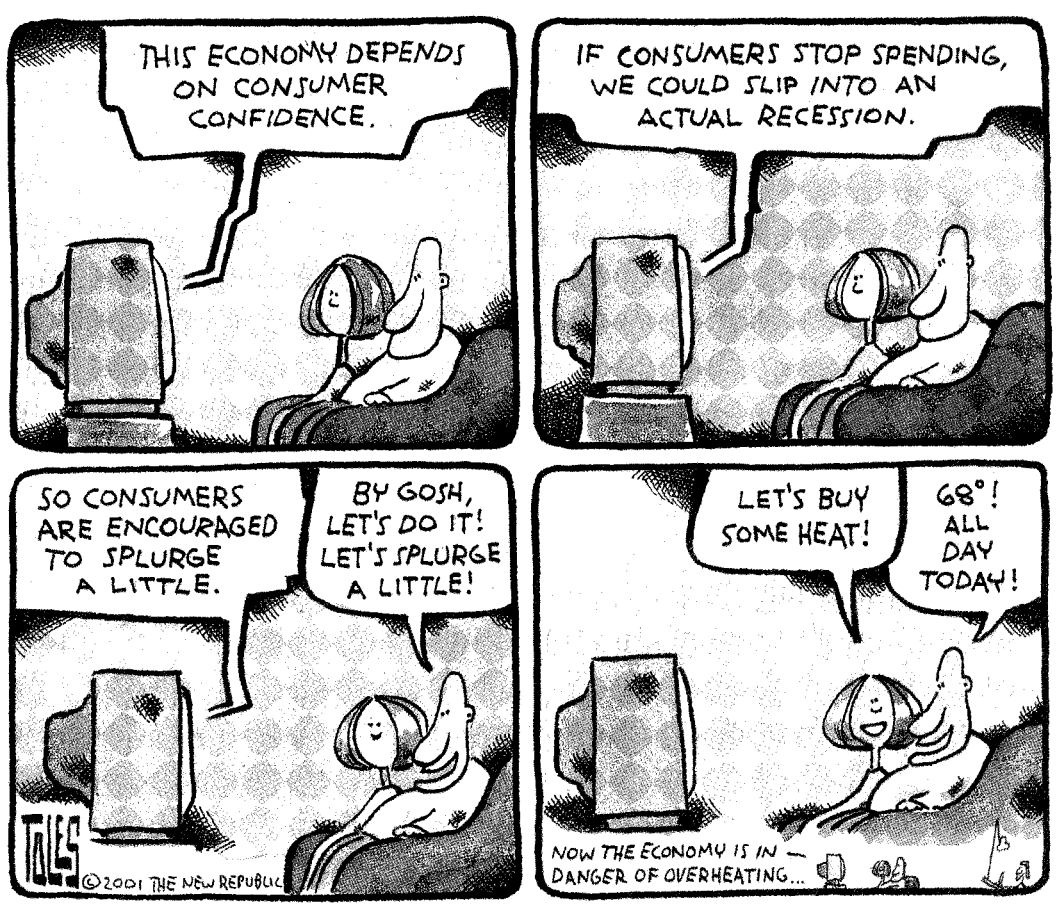
NOTEBOOK

STRIKE THREE: Throughout the presidential campaign, George W. Bush argued for his massive tax cut on the grounds that if the budget surplus stayed "in Washington" it would be spent by Congress (a possibility his subsequent actions have helped ensure; see "Cut and Run," page 12). When, after the election, the economy began to falter, the Bushies hit on a second rationale: the Keynesian argument that tax cuts will help avert a recession. And then, this week, the president hinted at a third: consumer debt. "Many of the Americans have got a consumer debt load that is significant," the president told an audience at a McLean, Virginia, toy store, "and it is important for us to provide meaningful tax relief for all taxpayers so that they can better manage their own personal accounts"—i.e., pay off their credit cards, mortgages, and other forms of personal debt. But if Bush is serious about this latest tack, he's going to have to abandon its predecessor. After all, the only way a tax cut can stimulate the economy is if people spend the money they would have paid in taxes. But if people spend that money, it's tough to see how they'll pay down their debts. In fact, to the extent the tax cut would have any role in averting a recession, it would *worsen* consumer debt. That's because, to have an immediate impact on the economy, Americans would have to start spending in anticipation of a tax cut but before they actually had any additional money in their wallets (which would happen this summer, at the very earliest, after the current, high-recession-risk period had passed). And spending money you don't have is a foolproof way to increase debt. One would hope that, even if Bush fails to understand this principle with regard to the federal government, someone might explain it to him in the context of personal finance.

PROTECTION RACKET: The New York mayoral election is still nine months away, but it's not too early for a primary—the bulletproof-vest primary, that is. Last month, Brooklyn Assemblyman Dov Hikind, who views every New York election as an opportunity to exact more favors from politicians seeking his endorsement and the tens of thousands of Orthodox Jewish votes he's thought to control (see "The Courtship," by David Grann, TNR, October 16, 2000), put out the word that he wanted to donate 500 bulletproof vests, at a cost of $1,200 each, to Jewish teachers and paramedics in the West Bank. Before he could say "Kevlar," Hikind had raised $125,000—much of it from New York pols. Most notably, according to the New York *Daily News*, City Controller Alan Hevesi, Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer, and Council Speaker Peter Vallone—all of whom are expected to run for mayor—anted up. But, while there was no clear winner in the bulletproof-vest primary, there was one definite loser: Public Advocate Mark Green, the fourth likely Democratic candidate, failed to chip in. Hikind told the *Daily News* that contributions, or lack thereof, will have no bearing on his endorsement. But if we were Green, we wouldn't waste too much time campaigning in Borough Park between now and the Democratic primary.

GIVING NEW MEANING TO "FOX NEWS": Jesse Jackson's infidelity outraged him. Bill Clinton's escapades incensed him. From Larry Flynt to marijuana to gay pride, Bill O'Reilly's moralistic fury, it seems, hath no boundaries. Except, apparently, when the obnoxious host of "The O'Reilly Factor" encounters moral decay on his own network. Take Fox's top-rated "Temptation Island," the voyeuristic sleazefest in which couples are sent to a tropical paradise to be tempted into infidelity. While he admitted the show might be "cruel," O'Reilly nonetheless leaped to its defense. "Novels


THIS ECONOMY DEPENDS ON CONSUMER CONFIDENCE.
IF CONSUMERS STOP SPENDING, WE COULD SLIP INTO AN ACTUAL RECESSION.
SO CONSUMERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO SPLURGE A LITTLE.
BY GOSH, LET'S DO IT! LET'S SPLURGE A LITTLE!
LET'S BUY SOME HEAT!
68°! ALL DAY TODAY!
NOW THE ECONOMY IS IN — DANGER OF OVERHEATING...
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throughout history have been based upon this kind of thing," he rationalized in January. "We have a society here that's adrift anyway." His best argument to the culture hawks circling above? Last week, miffed over advertisers who had left the show, he pointed out that the show was more hotties than hook-ups: "There's no sex." An oddly familiar argument.

OF COURSE IT WOULD: "Now would be a good time to call a truce on first lady-bashing."—Sheila Rabb Weidenfeld, *The Wall Street Journal* editorial page, February 4

DEPARTMENT OF POTS AND KETTLES, CONT'D: "They give their simple homilies, go on their ego trips, and don't understand how their positions are weakened and marginalized."—Ralph Nader, describing environmental groups in *The Hartford Courant*, February 4

REVERSAL OF FORTUNE: Over inaugural weekend, Reverend Walter Fauntroy, longtime civil rights activist and former Washington, D.C., delegate, stood on a stage four blocks from the Capitol with Reverend Al Sharpton, to protest the election of George W. Bush. He urged the crowd of more than 1,000 African Americans to "send so many people to the polls that they'll never do it again," adding, "We will overcome." It's a sentiment, however, that Fauntroy himself apparently overcame just nine days later. Last week, a smiling Fauntroy was again on stage in D.C., standing beside Bush as the new president created a White House office of faith-based initiatives. When he's not an anti-Bush activist, you see, Fauntroy pastors a D.C. church that could use some of the new money for its social service programs. Even Bush was surprised by the presence of Fauntroy and other black leaders previously hostile to him, joking, "If this was about politics, this room would be kind of empty, if you know what I mean." No, it was about politics, just not the principled kind.

WHO'S REALLY RUNNING THE COUNTRY, EXHIBIT ONE: "At approximately 11:30 a.m. this morning, while the Secret Service was on routine patrol around the White House, they heard shots fired and proceeded to surround a subject who was wielding a weapon, a gun.... The vice president was working in his West Wing office.... The president was working out in the residence at the time."—Bush spokesman Ari Fleischer, February 7

THE HIDDEN PLAGUE: "We're concerned about AIDS inside our White House, make no mistake about it."—Bush, February 7

AND WE THOUGHT IT WAS THE TAX CUT: "The Jews ... will steal [the election] and then they will remove [Gore] and then the Jew Lieberman will take over. This is why we support Bush."—Sheikh Ekrima Sabri, the Mufti of Jerusalem, *The New Yorker*, January 29

HOME NEWS: We are pleased to announce the debut of another feature at THE NEW REPUBLIC ONLINE: Punditry, a weekly column about politics by TNR editor Peter Beinart. New columns will appear Mondays at *www.thenewrepublic.com*.

HOME NEWS II: We are also pleased to announce several recent masthead changes. Sarah Blustain, formerly of *Lilith*, is TNR's new managing editor. Ruth Franklin moves to associate literary editor, and Katie Isenberg becomes assistant managing editor. David Grann, formerly a senior editor, is now a contributing editor. ■

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Who's afraid of reducing the national debt?

Cut and Run

By JONATHAN CHAIT

TODAY'S REPUBLICAN PARTY is defined by deep hostility to anything that gets in the way of upper-bracket tax cuts. That includes debt reduction. Trouble is, debt reduction is too popular to oppose outright. Even the GOP rank and file like it—as became apparent when Arizona Senator John McCain's call for debt reduction outpolled George W. Bush's tax-cut plan among Republican primary voters. So the fledgling Bush administration, along with its allies in Congress, has devised a new argument: Gee, we'd love to reduce the debt, but, sadly, it can't be done. So the only option for the surplus is, alas, to cut taxes.

To this end, Bush—no doubt aided by his political consultants—has created an entire vocabulary to assume away the possibility of reducing the debt. "The surplus," Bush likes to say, "means government has more money than it needs." If, as he puts it, the government only "needs" to cover the costs of its outlays in the current year, then by definition it cannot "need" to retire its debts or guard against future liabilities. As Bush explains it, there are not three options for using the surplus but two: "Do we keep it in Washington to expand the reach of the federal government, or do we give it back to the taxpayers?"

Indeed, it has become a Republican truism that if you keep the money in Washington, it's as good as gone. When asked about taxes during a Republican primary debate last January, Bush replied, "If we leave money in Washington, D.C., the people are going to spend it on bigger government and on more programs." And Bush is absolutely right when he says we can't pay down the debt because politicians in Washington want to spend it. He just neglects to mention that the politician in Washington most responsible for this state of affairs is Bush himself.

Bush's self-fulfilling argument against debt reduction finds its clearest rebuke in the record of the previous administration. When surpluses first appeared three years ago, Congress buzzed with plans to divvy them up. President Clinton put that talk to an immediate halt, declaring the money off-budget and insisting that Congress "save Social Security first." In response, Congress agreed to put Social Security's surplus in a "lockbox," where it would be saved for use only in reducing the national debt. Clinton followed that by taking Medicare off budget, too, resulting in even more debt reduction. The genius of lockboxes is this: They keep politicians from spending the surplus out of fear that they will be accused of raiding Social Security or Medicare. For the few years they've been in effect, these lockboxes have worked pretty well, resulting in $363 billion in debt reduction since 1998.

Now Bush, in his lust for tax cuts, is bent on dismantling them. Just before the inauguration, he floated opening the Social Security surplus for tax cuts and spending. "It's a question that needs to be asked," suggested Larry Lindsey, his chief economic adviser. Last week, Bush's press secretary, Ari Fleischer, declared that the president would break open the Medicare lockbox and use the money to fund a prescription-drug benefit. "If we can use the Medicare surplus to help get prescription drugs to seniors, we ought to do that," Fleischer argued, "as opposed to using Medicare money to pay off bonds or pay money to bondholders. So the president believes that every dollar that comes in for Medicare should be used for Medicare."

In his brief career flacking for Bush and others, Fleischer has made a minor art of befuddling reporters with budgetary legerdemain, and in this single utterance we find his technique at its most inspired. He suggests that Bush cares about protecting Medicare, in contrast to Democrats, who want to raid the program on behalf of rich bondholders. Notice that Fleischer never utters the words "national debt." He refers to a scheme to "pay money to bondholders," as though debt reduction were some sort of subsidy. (Or perhaps Bush really does believe it's wrong on principle to pay back bondholders, in which case his only option would be to follow the lead of the 1961 Cuban government and repudiate the national debt.) At the same time, Fleischer muddies the waters with enough budgetary jargon that nobody notices Bush's hand in the Medicare cookie jar.

IN REALITY, PUTTING the Medicare surplus on budget has absolutely nothing to do with using Medicare money "for Medicare." Medicare taxes will fund Medicare either way. If the program's surplus is used to buy back federal bonds, then those bonds can pay for Medicare benefits in the future. The real reason Bush needs to do away with the lockbox is that his tax cut and spending proposals would cost more than the regular budget surplus. Bush needs to dip into the Medicare surplus to make his numbers add up. If he puts the lockbox money back in the budget, he'll have an extra $400 billion to play with.

The irony of this is overwhelming. If Bush is cutting taxes because he doesn't trust Congress to pay down the debt, then why is he paying for it by eliminating a mechanism that *forces* Congress to pay down the debt? It's true that in the last two years Congress approved a massive spending spree, greased with a healthy dose of pork. Fiscal conservatives, such as Georgia Democratic Senator Zell Miller, cite this record as reason to support Bush's tax cut. But McCain identified the obvious flaw in this argument during the primaries. The president, he pointed out, is not "a hapless bystander." He can "veto bills and threaten to shut down the government to make [Congress] spend less money." The beauty in Bush's abdication of any obligation to stop pork is that it allows him the best of both political worlds: He can posture against fiscal irresponsibility while still reaping its political benefits. Remember how Bush promised to usher in the "responsibility era"? It didn't last very long. ■

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Why Are Minimum Wages So Popular?

Thomas MaCurdy is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and a professor of economics at Stanford University.

As in 1996, when we last saw an increase in the federal minimum wage from $4.25 to $5.15 an hour, political pressure is once again building to raise it by another $1. **What accounts for the popularity in the minimum wage?** Two beliefs! First, that raising the minimum wage is an effective antipoverty program and, second, that the minimum wage imposes little social cost. Anyone holding either view should acquaint themselves with the facts.

When considering the first belief, understand that most low-wage workers are not in poor families and that the bulk of the increased earnings attributable to raising the minimum wage does not accrue to low-income families. According to a variety of professional studies, only about one in four low-wage workers resides in families in the bottom 20 percent of the income distribution, and less than one in five dollars of the additional earnings goes to families who rely on low-wage compensation as their primary source of income. Moreover, as a pretax increase, many of the additional earnings are taxed away as Social Security contributions or as state and federal income taxes.

This brings us to the second common belief: Minimum wage hikes are manna from heaven–wages will rise and no one will bear the cost. This, of course, cannot be true. No one argues that artificially raising wages makes the economy more productive and actually boosts total national income. So the logic is inescapable. If low-wage workers receive more income after a minimum wage hike, someone must be paying for it.

When pressed, most minimum wage advocates suggest that "slight" price increases will be the primary source for paying for legislated wage increases. They heartily reject the view that low-wage workers will pay much directly through job loss or lowered employee benefits. An alternative is that firms will pay for those wage increases through lower profits, but it is unlikely that firms would bear significant profit losses without eliminating jobs. In relying on higher prices for covering mandated increases in wages, job loss can be kept to a minimum.

But then the question becomes, Who pays the higher prices to cover costs? A comprehensive analysis of the 1996 federal hike in the minimum wage estimates that prices rose on a broad range of commodities to fund this increase and that families of all income groups purchase these goods. Families in the lowest 20 percent of the income distribution pay annually an average of $61 in higher commodity costs, whereas families in the highest 20 percent pay only $150 more. The implied coverage of costs is at least as regressive as a conventional sales tax. Moreover, nearly 75 percent of poor families receive no additional earnings, but all paid higher costs following the minimum wage.

In fact, then, **increasing the minimum wage amounts to a policy that artificially raises prices in an income-regressive manner,** using the proceeds to pay higher earnings to workers in one in four families selected irrespective of their income. One wonders why such a policy enjoys the popularity it does.

— Thomas MaCurdy

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

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White House Watch

Taking Issue

By Ryan Lizza

A couple of weeks ago, Arizona Senator John McCain visited the Oval Office to discuss campaign finance reform with President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney. As in the past, there was some difference of opinion. On this, all reports agree. But when it comes to details of the meeting, accounts diverge. According to *Newsweek*, "Bush, showing respect and detailed knowledge, plunged into a lengthy discussion of the fine points of finance reform with his old rival." McCain advisers, however, have a different take. "Nothing could be further from the truth," says one. "McCain had to walk him through the bill three times." Near the end of the meeting, Bush told McCain, "Well, Dick here doesn't think we should have any limits." The vice president explained that he believed the post-Watergate reforms that capped the amount donors could give had hurt Republicans over the years. "Well," McCain shot back, "you must have liked it better when [Nixon fund-raiser] Maurice Stans was walking around with valises full of money."

Welcome to Round Two. A year after Bush and McCain's bitter primary fight, the two men still can't stand each other. While stories of Bush's "charm offensive" toward Democrats have acquired mythic status, those efforts do not, it appears, extend to his old GOP adversary. It wasn't until four days after the White House announced that Bush would be meeting with McCain that Chief of Staff Andy Card's office called the senator with the invitation. And while Bush didn't threaten to veto the McCain-Feingold campaign finance bill, the summit accomplished little. "The meeting was brief, cordial, and unproductive," says a McCain adviser. And since then? "We've had no contact with the White House. None. Not at any level."

There probably wouldn't be much to talk about anyway. Over the past few weeks, it's become clear that campaign finance is just the beginning for McCain, whose entire legislative agenda seems calibrated to enrage the White House. On gun control, he plans to push for closing the so-called gun-show loophole, a proposal that infuriates Bush's supporters in the gun lobby. On taxes, he recently said, "I believe that we ought to take care of those people that pay more in withholding taxes than they do in actual income taxes"—a stance more in keeping with congressional Democrats than with the administration. McCain advisers say the senator will soon add electoral reform to his many high-profile causes, an issue that picks at the scab of the Florida recount and Bush's claim to legitimacy. And just this week McCain thumbed the White House in the eye by publicly announcing his support for patients'-bill-of-rights legislation that Bush opposes.

So, instead of charming McCain, the White House is trying to undermine him. But if this week's skirmish over HMO reform is any indication, the administration will have its hands full. Since August, McCain has been working on a patients' bill of rights with a bipartisan group that included Senator Ted Kennedy, Democratic Representative John Dingell of Michigan, and two House Republicans, Greg Ganske of Iowa and Charlie Norwood of Georgia. The hope was to come up with a filibuster-proof version of the bipartisan Norwood-Dingell bill, which has already passed the House once but was stymied by Republican opposition in the Senate. The bipartisan effort wasn't exactly a secret—"[Bush adviser Karl Rove] and everyone in the world knew we were working on this," says Ganske—but when word leaked last Friday that McCain would take a prominent role in pushing the legislation, the White House went into panic mode. On Monday, Ganske—who says he'd been trying to meet with someone in the new administration for four weeks—was abruptly summoned to the White House along with fellow House Republican Norwood.

The meeting's purpose became apparent quickly: to persuade the two Republican legislators to drop their sponsorship of the bill and back out of a McCain-dominated press conference scheduled for the following day. They met in Rove's office on the second floor of the West Wing with Rove, Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy Josh Bolten, and Anne Phelps, Bush's health policy coordinator. The atmosphere was friendly: Rove showed his guests the "hidden vanity mirror" that Hillary Clinton, the office's previous occupant, left behind in a bookcase. Ganske reciprocated by opening his coat to show that he was wearing a campaign button from Rove's 1974 run for chairman of the College Republicans. The rest of the meeting was all business. Ganske, who had hosted the first big event for Bush before the Iowa caucuses and campaigned across the state for Bush this fall, informed Rove that the patients' bill of rights was his defining issue—what the fight over abortion is to some other Republicans. Moreover, he said, time was of the essence; groups opposed to the bill were already lobbying against it. "It's just like a political campaign," says Ganske. "If somebody is out there with an attack ad, you have to answer it. And we need to have our bill out there and our grassroots working." Rove was unmoved: For the White House it was tax cuts week; the president would turn to HMO reform on his own schedule. After three hours of discussion, Ganske was convinced that Bush wasn't about to propose a bill of his own any time soon.

Ganske and Norwood left the White House to meet with McCain, Dingell, and Kennedy, who was beamed in by teleconference. They all decided to go ahead with the original plan—except for Norwood. A dentist who had led the fight for a patients' bill of rights for four years, Norwood was persuaded by the White House meeting to take his name off the very legislation he had worked tirelessly to produce. The next day, he released a tortured statement explaining that he fully backed the legislation but he wouldn't co-sponsor it, because the administration deserved more time to come up with its own policy. Ganske, however, called Rove back

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Monday night to tell him he was sticking with McCain. "His reaction was civil," says Ganske. Then he adds, without being asked, "There were no threats."

According to members of the McCain camp, the meeting with Norwood and Ganske was just one element of a coordinated White House effort to weaken GOP support for the bill: Card, they say, had been phoning Republican senators to ask them not to back the bill. In the end, the effort apparently backfired, actually increasing media coverage of McCain's day in the sun. CNN broadcast the press conference live, showing the beaming senator surrounded by a diverse coalition of Republicans and Democrats. Bush spokesman Ari Fleischer spent most of his afternoon press briefing answering questions about whether the White House had strong-armed Norwood into withdrawing support from his own bill. Bush's only public event of the day, a stop at a toy store to plug tax cuts, was overshadowed by questions about McCain and the patients' bill of rights. Needless to say, the McCainiacs have only been emboldened. "The White House wanted to remove Republicans from this compromise legislation," says one adviser, "in an effort to try to isolate John from the rest of the party so they can say McCain was only trying to embarrass the president.... Their efforts to isolate McCain only make him stronger."

On Wednesday Bush sent Congress his own parameters for a patients' bill of rights, pointedly noting, "I do not believe that any bill currently before the Congress meets all of these principles." Bush wants a more restrictive mechanism for bringing lawsuits against insurance providers and a lower cap on punitive damages than McCain-Kennedy would provide. The White House is trying hard not to make the HMO-reform battle too personal. Bush told reporters Tuesday, "I am pleased that Senator Kennedy and Senator McCain have come together to offer a plan." Maybe. But it's hard not to suspect that the president's true sentiments are closer to those expressed by Bush congressional liaison Nick Calio in a *BusinessWeek* article last year. Asked his advice to businessmen who were solicited for contributions by the McCain campaign, Calio replied: "[T]ell him to screw himself." ■

On The Hill

Sweet Nothing

By Michael Crowley

They said it couldn't be done. George W. Bush couldn't saunter in to Washington, doling out nicknames and knowing winks, and charm congressional Democrats the way he'd won over the weak-kneed hacks of the Texas legislature. The Democrats on Capitol Hill were too partisan, too bitter about the election, too contemptuous of Bush to be charmed.

And they were right. To hear the media tell it, you'd think Beltway Democrats had spent the last couple of weeks fainting like B-movie starlets at Bush's feet, overwhelmed by presidential invitations and backslaps, giddy with bipartisanship. That's nonsense. The Dems view Bush pretty much the way they viewed him during the campaign—as a nice-enough guy who barely understands the right-leaning policies he's foisting on the nation. "The idea that there's some wonderful love affair is based on nothing," says Massachusetts Representative Barney Frank, one of the Democrats Bush has tried to schmooze. "You can't shit a shitter. We're all in the business of charming each other."

For many commentators, Bush's unprecedented decision to address the House and Senate Democratic caucuses was clear evidence that Washington has entered an era of good feeling. But Bush's Democratic audiences weren't exactly wowed. "Too much is being made of it," said Connecticut Senator Chris Dodd after emerging from Bush's speech to the Senate Democrats last Friday.

And Bush's road trip to the Democrats' retreat in Pennsylvania two days later was something close to a fiasco. House liberals hurled unexpectedly aggressive questions at Bush on everything from census sampling to election reform to his proposed tax cut. (The questions, prescreened by House leaders and quickly leaked to the press, were clearly designed in part for public consumption.) And Democrats made little effort to disguise their dissatisfaction with Bush's answers. "Our general sense was that he was not very well-prepared and did not appear to understand [the issues] and was not very comfortable," said Frank. "He is very shaky when it comes to substance," added a House leadership aide. "He was up at the podium, and when he had questions he was determined not to get off his talking points. And if he did he either reverts back to them or he seemed to get confused." More than one observer said that Bush, when pressed by California Representative Nancy Pelosi about why he blocked federal funds for overseas family-planning organizations, seemed caught in the headlights. "He didn't seem to understand what his executive order did," said one Northeastern Democrat. "He had no clue what he was talking about." "It was embarrassing," said the leadership aide, "and you could tell people felt for the guy."

None of which is to say that the congressional Democrats aren't floundering. They clearly are. But it's not because of Bush's charm; it's because of Clinton's absence. For the first time in eight years, Hill Democrats can't cling to the apron strings of a White House that provided them detailed policy analysis and shrewd political marketing. As a result, they have been painfully slow to produce an effective, united response to the Bush agenda. "Our message hasn't been totally worked out yet," says one Democratic congressman. "People [at the retreat] were suggesting all kinds of things that we need to be focused on." Adds California Representative Cal Dooley, "Unfortunately, we're still casting about on too many issues."

Part of the problem, explains a leadership aide, is that

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roughly half the House Democrats have never served under a Republican president: "This is an entirely different political world we're operating in here.... For the past eight years, ninety percent of the agenda has been driven by the White House." After all, the White House did more than provide congressional Democrats a bully pulpit and veto pen. Number crunchers and policy analysts from the Office of Management and Budget and the Treasury Department made sure congressional Democrats had the stats to instantly dissect GOP claims. Congressional staffers don't have comparable resources or expertise. As Bush spent the week trotting out average families who would benefit from his tax cut, Democrats flooded left-leaning think tanks like the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities with requests to fact-check Bush's numbers and help craft their response. "We are a resource-depleted operation," says Michael Meehan, a Senate leadership aide headed to the Democratic National Committee. "So we have to look at the DNC apparatus, and to groups around town and the country, to supply us with ammunition."

Using the powers of the White House, the Bush team has set up a tax cut war room—which last week, according to *The Washington Times*, orchestrated a conference call to provide talking points to about 150 GOP press secretaries. The Democrats, by contrast, have been all over the map on the issue—sometimes sounding hostile to a big tax cut, sometimes sounding supportive, sometimes saying the problem is the tax cut's size, sometimes saying it's the tax cut's tilt to the rich. Tom Daschle and Dick Gephardt, the Senate and House Democratic leaders, hope that by later this month they can produce a Democratic tax plan that most members of their caucuses will support. And Daschle and Gephardt seem headed for an agreement on two things: a price tag of some $750 billion to $850 billion over ten years and a basic formula that would devote a third of the budget surplus to tax cuts, a third to new spending, and the remaining third to debt reduction.

But there are plenty of ways to reach those goals. And without a Supreme Leader in the Oval Office, Daschle and Gephardt haven't been able to move the 250-plus congressional Democrats onto a single path. Some Democrats are pushing a "surplus dividend," which would return money to taxpayers each year there was a surplus without building in long-term rate cuts. (North Dakota Senator Byron Dorgan, one of Daschle's top lieutenants, told me he favors this approach.) Others want a tax credit for Social Security payments, or a drop in the lowest income tax bracket. There's also talk of expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit from the working poor to every income level—mainly to the benefit of middle incomes. Some moderate Democrats, like Indiana's Evan Bayh and Louisiana's Mary Landrieu, want a tax cut "trigger" linking any long-term tax cuts to the size of the surplus.

And not all Democrats even agree on dividing the surplus into thirds. Some centrists worry that committing one-third to new spending—which amounts to nearly $1 trillion—is politically deadly as well as bad policy. The conservative Blue Dog coalition wants fully half the surplus to go to debt reduction, with the rest divided between spending and tax cuts. "It gets hard," admits a House leadership aide. "There are a hundred good ideas about how to do this."

But the longer the Dems go without their own alternative, the harder it will be to rally public opinion against Bush's tax cut. "I'm a little concerned that we haven't at this point coalesced around a tax proposal," says Dooley. "The problem is that you can't beat something with nothing."

In their frustration, congressional Dems are turning to—you guessed it—the Clinton administration. House and Senate Democrats invited Robert Rubin to speak to them on tax and budget issues last week, and Laura Tyson and Leon Panetta each visited one of the gatherings as well. Terry McAuliffe, the newly installed Democratic National Committee chairman and Clinton pal, noted his party's new institutional disadvantage in his acceptance speech last week and vowed to triple the DNC's communications and research offices' staff. He also promised to equip party foot soldiers with messages of the day, talking points and talking heads. ("Democrats need the best message, research and ideas ... all at lightning speed," McAuliffe explained.) Meanwhile, McAuliffe has already hired a handful of former Clintonites to run his transition, including the battle-tested Harold Ickes, and has talked of a DNC policy shop advised by Clinton stars like Sandy Berger, Larry Summers, and even the Man from Hope himself.

Democrats are particularly eager to make more use of Rubin. Wouldn't it be helpful, I asked one top aide, if the party's only credible answer to Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan expressed his concerns about the tax cut publicly? "Yeah, we know," the aide replied, heaving a sigh. Apparently, Rubin has been urged to do so but feels compelled by etiquette to keep a dignified low profile. That's not enough to deter fretful Democrats, though. Says another leadership aide: "I'm going to tell every reporter to call him." And, for that matter, does anyone happen to know the area code in Chappaqua? ■

Tel Aviv Dispatch

Pierced

By Yossi Klein Halevi

On the last day of Ehud Barak's Israel, thousands of people converged on Sheinkin Street, mythic center of Israel's youth culture, where even the local falafel stall nods to Hollywood with a photograph of Charlie Chaplin. They spent Election Day eating Dutch pancakes and Belgian waffles, shopping in whimsical stores that sell puppets and antique clothes, and gawking at the body-piercing shop with its plastic display of a multiple-pierced penis. Animal rights protesters wore masks of dogs and chickens, as if Israeli politics were no longer defined by an existential threat. Few places in the Jewish state celebrate frivolity, and on this day, when Israel conceded the end of its hope for a rational Middle

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East, the crowds on Sheinkin clung to its defiant normalcy.

Zionism promised to fulfill the Jews' two contradictory desires: to realize their messianic destiny and to become a normal nation like any other. Jerusalem represents the first longing, Tel Aviv the second. Here on Sheinkin Street was the Israel that Barak's election only 18 months ago seemed to portend: postwar and post-historical, less Middle Eastern than Mediterranean. Yet Sheinkin Street no longer feels like a harbinger; it feels instead like an aberration.

Just beneath Sheinkin's forced optimism is mourning. On January 23, Motti Dayan and Etgar Zaituni, owners of a popular restaurant on Sheinkin called Yuppies, were murdered by Palestinian gunmen in the West Bank town of Tulkarm, where they'd gone with an Arab friend to buy clay pots. OUR BROTHERS' BLOOD CRIES OUT, read a handwritten poster on the façade of the deserted restaurant, urging people to recite Psalms for the elevation of their souls. The language belonged not to Tel Aviv but to Jerusalem, and it felt like an intrusion. Passers-by touched the wood grating as though it were a mezuzah; faded bouquets protruded from its apertures. "These were the two guys who were killed," people said to each other, as if dozens of other Israelis haven't also died in the new intifada.

And yet they were right to speak of these deaths as unique, even emblematic. The clichéd Israeli vision of peace is feeling safe enough to enter a restaurant anywhere in the Middle East and eat hummus. Zaituni and Dayan were eating hummus on Tulkarm's main street when masked gunmen appeared, videotaped their final pleas, and shot them. That the victims were from Sheinkin made the irony complete.

"Their belief in peace killed them," said the young woman dressed all in black with thick, red lipstick, who runs an unnamed clothing shop nearby that sells only black and red dresses. "They had Arab friends and believed in coexistence with all their hearts. Why be afraid of going to Tulkarm? What's the difference between Arabs and Jews? I also thought like them. But no matter what we do, there will never be peace here. They want to devour us. It's a decree from heaven."

Her despair is widely shared by leftists, many of whom didn't bother to vote. Not a single Barak banner hung from the peeling balconies above Sheinkin's shops to counter the Sharon banners displayed by several Sephardi and Orthodox families who live on the street. A loudspeaker mounted on a Barak campaign car—covered with photographs of gas masks as a warning of what Ariel Sharon might bring—passed through briefly, broadcasting a desperate message: "This isn't the time to shop! Give your vote for peace!"

But Sheinkin couldn't rouse itself for a process it knew had died. Sharon's right-wing and religious coalition was unstoppable. Tel Aviv had tried to make peace by offering Jerusalem to Arafat; now Jerusalem was taking its revenge.

IN CAFÉ TAMAR, whose walls and windows and even cash register are covered with posters and stickers of the left's campaigns against the settlements and the war in Lebanon, no campaign posters hung for Barak. In the last election, Café Tamar was so politicized that pro-Netanyahu patrons were thrown out. But now it's as if the café has turned itself into a left-wing museum, conceding the end of the struggle. Sarah Stern, the gravelly voiced owner who greets the young patrons in Yiddish, said, "We used to have such fights here that the police had to come to calm things down. But who can get excited now? The Likud sent a sound truck to provoke me, but I didn't even go outside to yell at them."

But then, as if debating with herself, she abruptly switched tones. "Everyone has to vote!" she announced to the bemused patrons, all of whose names and favorite drinks she knows. "You call yourself left-wing and you're not going to vote to stop Sharon?" she shouted at a regular she mockingly called "the professor," who smiled and shrugged. "We have enough young men without arms and legs," she persisted. "Do we need another war here?"

But haven't we tried to make peace? I asked. Her dovishness vanished. "Don't think I'm a pushover," she replied. "If they kill one of us, we should kill twenty of them."

NOT ONLY JERUSALEM'S politics but even its mysticism had come to Tel Aviv. Inside the "Just Kabbalah" shop, young people examined blessed water and candles imprinted with magical Hebrew formulas and books promising eternal life and financial success. The salesperson, a former El Al stewardess named Odeyah who wore a red thread around her wrist as protection from the evil eye, explained to a browser that you don't have to be Orthodox to practice Jewish mysticism. "I'm still secular, I'm just happier," she said, then added, "Kabbalah says the way for Israel to find peace is to first have peace among Jews."

Outside, two dozen young men with thick side locks and white skullcaps entirely covering their shaved heads danced in the street before a sound truck blaring Hasidic melodies set to trance music. They were followers of Rebbe Nachman, the nineteenth-century Hasidic rabbi who preached against despair. And so they twirled and grinned and waved their arms, an onslaught of Jewish joy on Sheinkin Street. Though they wore the ultra-Orthodox uniform of white shirts and black polyester pants, their work boots and running shoes exposed them as recent penitents; no doubt some of them had known Sheinkin Street as secularists. One teenager with a pierced eyebrow, watching from the sidewalk, waved her arms in mimicry. But most passers-by tried to ignore the born-again Hasidim, perhaps fearing the fragility of Israel's border between militant secularism and militant faith.

The sound truck played the group's mantra, "Na Nach Nachma Nachman from Uman," invoking Rebbe Nachman and the Ukrainian town in which he's buried. Though no one quite knows what it's supposed to mean, the mantra appears on bumper stickers and banners and graffiti across the country, an incoherent plea for intercession from the revered saint. Stuck behind the sound truck and the phalanx of dancing Hasidim was a Sharon campaign car, covered with posters promising that the Likud leader would bring peace and security. But even the Sharon campaign wasn't taking chances. Pasted on the window was a NA NACH sticker, just in case. ■

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Can California's energy companies change a lightbulb?

Brown and Out

By GREGG EASTERBROOK

AS THE LIGHTS continue to flicker in California, pundits have turned to arguing over who is at fault: state politicians, the enviros, the feds, or consumers. To some degree, it's all of the above. But the biggest culprits are the California utilities themselves, members of a pampered industry that was unprepared for true competition and reacted with several of the worst business decisions in recent American history.

To understand how California power went haywire, it's important to bear in mind that since the banking industry became more competitive in the 1980s and early '90s, the regulated utility industry has been the last stronghold of the featherbedded managerial class. If you wanted a management job that let you sit in a nice office, sign a few papers, and hit the golf course by two o'clock in the afternoon, the utilities were for you. Utterly constrained by rules, officers of regulated utilities made few meaningful decisions and took few risks. Utilities asked public commissions for permission to build power plants; the commissions dictated the terms and took the heat for errors; the plants were guaranteed to be profitable, because cost-plus charges were passed to ratepayers under a monopoly arrangement. When a Washington state utility that hopelessly mismanaged construction of a nuclear power plant went bankrupt in 1994, industry observers were stunned—it had long been assumed that it wasn't *possible* to lose money running an electric utility.

Not surprisingly, the power business generally attracted executives who were risk-averse, or simply not as good as those slugging it out in the free marketplace. So when California deregulated its electricity market in the mid-'90s—replacing a closed, structured system with something approaching the Wild West—utility executives responded with a series of spectacularly bad calls. Eventually, electricity deregulation may be seen as a good idea—it's worth remembering that telephone and airline deregulation started badly, too, and today both are deemed to have benefited consumers. In the longer term, technological advances may render the whole issue of centralized electricity provision moot. But, for the moment, California's energy fiasco will get worse before it gets better. And bungling businesspeople, not politicians or enviros, deserve most of the blame.

From roughly the mid-'70s to the late '80s, conventional wisdom held that an electricity supply crunch was looming: As recently as 1990, for example, the North American Electric Reliability Council forecast imminent brownouts and drastic price increases for New England. Instead, conservation technology—better insulation, high-efficiency air conditioners, etc.—reduced demand while power utilities unexpectedly improved their performance, in part by coaxing atomic reactors to run for longer periods at high output. By the mid-'90s, the price of electricity had gone down, and projected shortages had become surpluses almost everywhere. In California, electricity use per capita declined even as the economy and population grew.

Rather than view this turnaround as proof that you can't predict the future, a motley coalition of enviros, entrepreneurs, utility haters, and true believers in deregulation used it to make another prediction about the future: that prices would fall and power would stay plentiful indefinitely. The prediction conveniently offered each faction an excuse to pursue its agenda. For the enviros, plentiful electricity was an opportunity to block new power plants and maybe even shut down atomic reactors. For entrepreneurs, it meant it was safe to shake up the old, highly regulated power industry—cutting themselves into the business. For the "I hate utilities" crowd—a considerable force in California politics, where Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) and Southern California Edison have Trilateral Commission-like reputations that are hard to explain rationally—plentiful supply offered an opportunity to punish the evil utilities for their sins. For deregulators, it provided the chance to dismantle a nineteenth-century-style "natural monopoly" and replace it with market competition.

By the mid-'90s many states were considering power deregulation, and California was on the cutting edge. In 1996, the various factions began meeting in Sacramento to debate dissolving California's utility structure. It all happened in full view, but with the public's eyes glazed over. (There are no words more sleep-inducing than "electric utility deregulation.") It was at these initial meetings that the utility industry—lulled into an exaggerated view of its own business acumen by years of big salaries and guaranteed profits—made its first disastrous misjudgment. Convinced that they would ultimately profit from deregulation, the utilities decided they'd go along pretty much regardless of the details.

The true believers, of course, wanted true deregulation, whereby anyone could sell power to your home or office at whatever price the market would bear, with no government restrictions. But the California legislature wouldn't agree—since in a truly free market the legislature would have no influence. So it concocted a hybrid scheme in which the generation and wholesale trading of electricity would be deregulated but its retail sale to consumers would remain controlled until 2002. To keep voters happy—this was when

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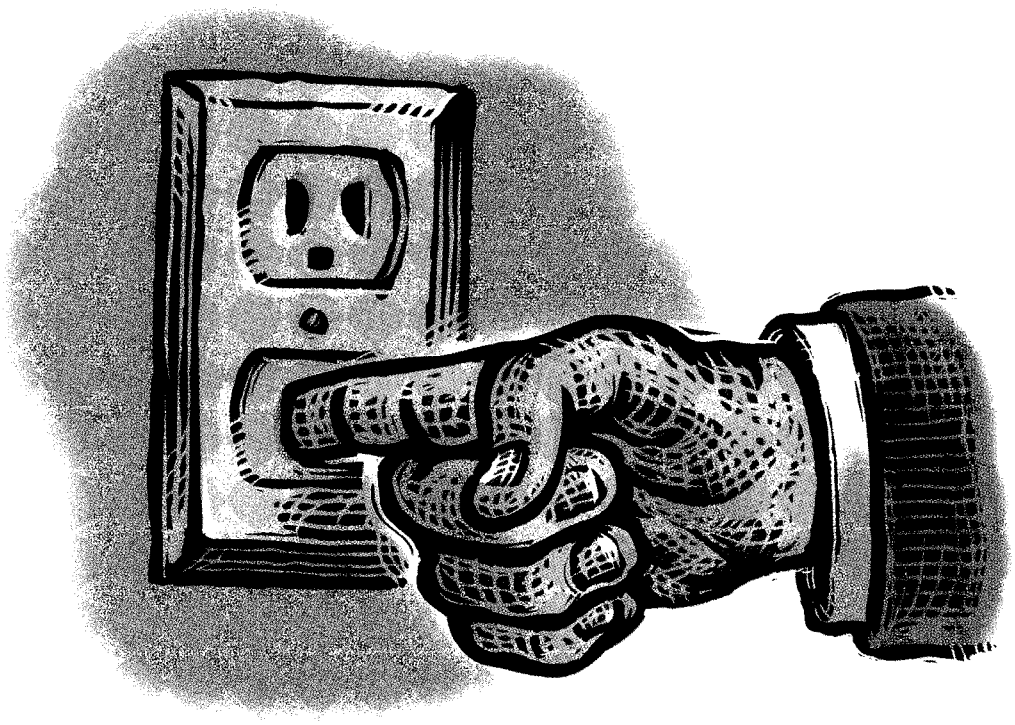
then-Governor Pete Wilson still dreamed of running for president—a 10 percent across-the-board rate cut till 2002 was thrown into the deal.

But that was only the basic plan. Through extensive lobbying (California utilities spent $4.3 million that year to lobby Sacramento) and political groupthink, a series of other provisions were included—most of which would backfire. PG&E, SoCal Edison, and San Diego Gas & Electric, the state's big shareholder-owned companies, were required to sell at least half their power-generating plants and strongly "encouraged" to unload the rest. The theory was that this would bring more players into the business, increasing competition. The reality was that the big California utilities lost much of their ability to make power and were left at the mercy of generating companies headquartered in other states, such as Texas's Dynegy and North Carolina's Duke Power. (Exempted from the sell-off requirement was the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power; it kept its generating plants, which is why L.A. has been spared the rolling blackouts that have become facts of life in Northern California.)



BILL RUSSELL

The big California utilities agreed to the sell-off for two reasons. The first was the new-economy fixation on getting out of production and into services. Why generate power (very old-economy; resources are consumed!) when you could bill for delivery of power produced by someone else? Second, selling off generating plants would temporarily boost the bottom line. Soon after deregulation, for instance, SDG&E sold its Carlsbad generating station and a few related power properties in San Diego for four times the book value, delighting company management. But the ability to sell generating stations for much more than they believed the facilities were worth should have told the California utilities something. It meant that more experienced, market-oriented managers of firms like Dynegy and Duke Power, which were snapping up California generating stations, didn't think the electricity market would remain soft for long.

Other states, among them Massachusetts and Rhode Island, also deregulated by requiring utilities to sell off generating plants—and nothing went wrong. California's plan proved disastrous because it mandated sell-offs *and*, insanely, banned utilities from signing long-term contracts with suppliers (called "forward power" in the industry). Instead of being able to hedge future price trends, California utilities would have to buy watts by the hour on one of two new perpetual spot markets, the California Power Exchange and the Orwellian-sounding Independent System Operator.

Parochial agendas and bad business-thinking had converged. The utility haters demanded that the new system be wholly transparent, which meant an end to long-term contracts, since the parties to such contracts don't necessarily disclose terms. For their part, the utilities thought a spot market would ruthlessly drive down prices by making suppliers edgy about finding buyers. That's what happens *sometimes* on the petroleum spot market—sellers nervously cut prices when demand is soft. But oil spot markets are also notorious for upward volatility when demand rises or supply declines. And the California plan built in no safeguards for what would happen if demand began outpacing supply. Says one participant in the 1996 negotiations, "We just never talked about prices going up. We wished it away."

When it first took effect in 1998 and 1999, California deregulation worked like a dream—demand was soft, natural gas was cheap, and the perpetual spot market did inspire nervous suppliers to slash prices. But then the independent power companies' bet began to pay off: The Golden State's high-tech boom and overall affluence began nudging per capita consumption of watts back up. Available supply could not keep pace, because California hadn't built a new power plant in about a decade—mostly because local communities refused to allow power plants in their backyards and because of uncertainty about deregulation. (Conservatives blame California's strict anti-smog rules, which prevent the construction of coal-fired power plants; but the rules allow new natural-gas-driven plants, which are what most power companies want to build anyway.)

In the past, other Western states might have helped out. Traditionally, Washington state, Oregon, and Montana sold power to California in the summer, when the Golden State's

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air conditioners were whirring, and California sold power back to those states in the winter, when they were cold. But the Washington, Oregon, and Montana economies were expanding as well, and they no longer had excess power to sell. To make matters worse, natural gas prices began one of their cyclical upswings, causing the cost of power generation to rise throughout the region, while three straight years of sparse rainfall lowered the reservoirs of Western hydro systems, reducing megawattage from Columbia River dams by about one-third.

BY LAST SUMMER, California was caught in the energy equivalent of the perfect storm. As demand began outstripping available supply, electricity that had been selling for about $30 per megawatt-hour in 1998 rose to $150, then to $600, and some days to as much as $1,500. Governor Gray Davis blamed "out-of-state profiteers," conveniently slipping past the fact that many California power plants are owned by out-of-state firms because the state legislature had *mandated* that their California owners sell them. Ripple effects drove up prices throughout the Northwest, resulting in economic absurdities. Factories that held long-term low-priced power contracts found they could make money by closing down and marketing their unused power allotments. The Kaiser Aluminum plant in Mead, Washington, shuttered in November 2000 after realizing it could make a higher return by not manufacturing aluminum and instead selling electrons contracted from the Bonneville Power Administration at $22.50 per megawatt-hour back to the same organization for $555 per megawatt-hour.

As power prices rose, media reports made it seem as if California consumers were getting soaked. They weren't; the legislature's rate freeze meant that consumers' rates were, with a two-month exception in San Diego, locked in place until 2002. The ones feeling it in the pocketbook were the utilities themselves, which were buying power at around $1 per kilowatt-hour and reselling it to residential consumers at the state maximum of 6.5 cents per kilowatt-hour. Using this canny philosophy of "buy high, sell low," PG&E and SoCal Edison combined during 2000 to lose a cool $12 billion.

The spot markets, which were supposed to keep prices low, did the reverse. With long-term contracts abolished, producers realized they could game California's Independent System Operator spot market by removing generating stations from service. Everyone had assumed power blackouts were impossible in winter, California's low-demand season for electricity. But in December roughly 11,000 megawatts of generating capacity—about one-fifth of the state's total—were withdrawn from service either for maintenance work or simply to reduce supply and thus raise prices. Legislators and consumer groups were livid, but the new, independent power-generating companies were not bound by the same legal obligations that governed the old, regulated utilities. They were simply responding to the imperatives of the market the California legislature had created. As Massachusetts Institute of Technology economist Paul Joskow notes, "If a generator has a long-term contract, then the financial incentive is to generate steady power in order to maximize sales. If you have no contractual promises and there's a new price every day on a spot market, then your incentive is to withhold production to maximize price. Banning forward power was just an incredible blunder." Meanwhile, perverse incentives were at work for consumers too. Because the rate freeze meant consumers did not see the price run-up on their bills, many Californians continued to waste power like crazy during a period of electricity scarcity. Blackouts loomed, yet Californians left their pool heaters on.

Desperate to forestall outages, power managers ordered that hydro reservoirs be drawn down—ensuring that next summer, when demand is at its peak, California's power crunch will be even worse. (Because the hydro systems are mainly public, like Bonneville, system managers can issue them orders in a way they cannot issue orders to private generating plants.) During some of the rolling blackouts, there has actually been spare power in Los Angeles, but it couldn't be zapped north, because California has not modernized its transmission grid in years. The "hate utilities" crowd had long fought construction of new power lines because of irrational claims about magnetic fields, while the utilities themselves, under the illusion that more power would never be needed, had decreed new lines unnecessary.

BLEEDING MONEY, PG&E and SoCal Edison hit on an innovative solution: refuse to pay suppliers. This has staved off bankruptcy, but numerous defaults loom, and nonpayment further encourages generating stations to withhold their product. The "hate utilities" lobby, still politically potent even as the utilities gasp for breath, recently accused PG&E and SoCal Edison of staging their own bankruptcies by transferring large amounts of cash to parent companies shortly before the chaos began. But this was normal business practice—proceeds from the sales of generating stations were being assigned back to the shareholders who originally put up the equity to build them. The financial desperation of companies buying kilowatt-hours for $1 each and selling them for 6.5 cents each was only too real.

Just before Christmas, Washington, D.C., stepped in and, using the emergency powers of the Department of Energy, ordered other Western states to provide extra electricity to California. The national-emergency orders had two effects. First, they created an electricity scarcity in Washington state and Oregon, where it's high-demand season and where, unlike in California, there are no rate freezes. In Seattle this winter, residential utility bills have risen by one-third, which means that consumers there are paying for California's blunders so California consumers do not have to. Second, because federal orders have forced regional suppliers to deliver power to PG&E and SoCal Edison, and the utilities have refused to pay, courts may eventually hold the feds financially liable. In that case, taxpayers across the country will end up footing the bill so Californians can keep their pool heaters on.

In late January, the Bush administration said it would not extend the federal emergency orders past February 7. Bush wanted both to cut national taxpayers' losses and to force California to bite some bullet, any bullet. Last week, the state legislature gave in and enacted a savings-and-loans-style

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bailout. California itself—whose credit, unlike the utilities', remains good—will buy at least $10 billion worth of power through long-term contracts, then redistribute it. Revenue bonds will underwrite the purchases, and the costs will be passed on to consumers, which means that for most Californians the rate holiday will finally conclude. The state will also impose mandatory power conservation, in hopes of getting through next summer. The end result? Between mandatory usage restrictions and the state itself becoming a giant utility enterprise, California power will be more regulated and politicized than before deregulation, but at a higher price: the worst of both worlds.

In the long run, the California power mess may actually do some good—by eventually helping society move beyond central utilities altogether. Today, when a typical coal-fired generating station (source of the lion's share of U.S. electricity) runs, only about 40 percent of the fuel's energy value is converted into watts, and some of that yield disappears in transmission losses as it travels over power lines. Meanwhile centralized generation linked to a big grid means that power stations produce more energy than customers actually require. When you turn off the lights in your house, you cut your utility bill, but strictly speaking you have not saved any energy: The nearby power plant can't possibly detect such a tiny reduction in overall usage and ramp down by a correspondingly tiny amount. Multiplied by millions of homes, this inflexibility creates tremendous waste. Central electricity generation has worked wonders to raise living standards, but it is not a model of efficiency.

Eventually, the central utility will be replaced by localized or even house-by-house generation. Steadily falling prices in solar cells will probably make home production of electricity practical for Sun Belt states within the next decade or so. Homes, schools, and stores will gradually kiss the grid goodbye, with generating stations serving mainly industry.

Outside the Sun Belt, where there isn't enough sunshine for solar cells to be reliable, centralized utilities will give way to another kind of innovation: the unimaginatively named "fuel cell." Fuel cells combine oxygen and hydrogen, or similar gases based on natural gas, to make electricity, with water vapor as the by-product. Basically they mimic photosynthesis, only in reverse. Fuel cells were once so breathtakingly expensive that they were used exclusively in spacecraft. But recent, intensive research has brought their price down so low that Mercedes-Benz plans to market a fuel-cell-powered car in 2005. If the price keeps falling, fuel cells will become cheap enough to put into your basement. They will be simple appliances, since they contain no moving parts; and they're safer than furnaces. Fuel cells will also be cleaner than current power forms, since (depending on the fuel) they emit very little pollution and greenhouse gases, or none at all.

Eventually, fuel cells may do for American homes, offices, and schools what furnaces once did. In the nineteenth century, apartments and other urban buildings were attached by steam lines to "district heating" plants that produced centralized warmth. Once furnaces became affordable, they proved far more efficient than district heating—your furnace only ran when you needed it, and there were no transmission losses. In the twenty-first century, fuel cells may do the same thing.

The transition from central power plants to home electricity production will take decades, of course. And a world where individuals make their own electricity will still be a world that needs energy—somebody will have to supply the hydrogen or natural gas derivatives that run the fuel cells. But it will also be a world in which everyone bids the electricity grid a fond farewell. Bumbling businessmen may have sown energy chaos in California for years to come. But if their ineptitude helps inspire us eventually to abandon centralized power altogether, we may one day look back on it as a harbinger of good things to come. ■

Amazon.com and the return of the old economy.

The Jungle

By JONATHAN COHN

SEATTLE

WHEN I FIRST encountered Alan Barclay, he still believed in Amazon.com. It was mid-January, and we met at a downtown Seattle pub to discuss his efforts to help organize Amazon's customer service staff into a union—and thus give organized labor its first foothold in the Internet economy. Barclay, 39, was an unlikely rabble-rouser: He has a bachelor's degree in anthropology and, with his thin goatee, looks more bohemian than blue-collar. But he was a key figure in the campaign, having spent the last few months sending e-mail messages to co-workers, drafting union propaganda, and quietly arranging meetings in co-workers' basements. He could even claim some credit for the campaign's name, "Day 2"—a play on Amazon's unofficial corporate motto that it is always "day one" at the fledgling Internet retailer.

In Barclay's mind, the drive to form a union wasn't an act of disloyalty but an act of faith—not just a campaign for financial security but an effort to return the company to the values it had once embodied. Barclay considered himself an "Amazonian." He wanted to bring the company back to its early, heady days when philosophy majors eagerly manned the phones and managers worked hand in hand

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with frontline employees. Barclay didn't just consider Amazon's recent turn toward corporate hierarchy, rigid work rules, and outsourcing a personal betrayal; he considered it a betrayal of the company itself. "Day 2," said Barclay, "would restore what I once felt I had at Amazon."

A week later, Barclay, a telecommuter, received an e-mail message at home from Bill Price, Amazon's vice president of customer service: Amazon was terminating nearly all of its Seattle customer service workforce—some 400 employees in all, Barclay among them. Although rumors about downsizing had been circulating for weeks, the move came as a shock; Price had assured nervous employees just six weeks earlier that the company had no immediate plans for layoffs. What's more, the doomed Seattle division included some of Amazon's most senior employees—people like Barclay, a company old-timer at 33 months—whose institutional knowledge and superior skills supposedly made them indispensable to Amazon's mission of becoming the "earth's most customer-centric company." Of course, those same qualities also made them some of Amazon's most expensive, and demanding, employees. And that, apparently, made them expendable after all. "I want you to know that this was a very difficult decision for the company to make, but the unfortunate reality is that it is simply a matter of economics," read Price's e-mail message. "Seattle is our least cost-effective location, in both labor and real estate costs, and we need to consolidate our operations across the US."

After absorbing the news, Barclay started typing. His job at Amazon had included corresponding with disgruntled customers. Now he fired off an angry e-mail message of his own. "As an employee," he wrote me, "any illusions I might have had about the nobility of Amazon.com have been shattered."

WAS BARCLAY HOPELESSLY naïve? Perhaps. But he wasn't alone. Only last year, the vision he embraced, about Amazon in particular and the new economy in general, was widely peddled by management gurus, business magazines, and Washington politicos.

You remember the story line. The new, information-age economy required workers with greater skills than, say, your typical stock boy or secretary. To attract such people, companies would offer lavish benefits and unparalleled creative freedom. The regimented, top-down management structure of yesteryear would disappear, replaced by a new paradigm of fluid, democratic workplaces where even frontline workers received autonomy, high wages, and partial ownership of the company via stock options. If workers changed jobs frequently, as seemed likely, it would be on their own terms—and for their own benefit. "The new economy," wrote Alan Webber, founder of the business magazine *Fast Company*, "would celebrate individuality, workplace democracy and creativity over the old economy mind-set that put a premium on the organization man, corporatism and sheer size. In the new economy, one individual could make a very big difference.... And, for that effort, that person would receive not just a salary—the old economy's fair day's pay for a fair day's work—but also a share in the value created by his or her ingenuity, intelligence and innovation."

Washington struggled to catch up. On both sides of the aisle, politicians and pundits demanded that government embrace the ethos of the new economy. What, after all, is the point of unions, with their antiquated, bipolar view of management and labor, in a world where that distinction has blurred to unrecognizability? The workforce of the new economy would consist of technologically savvy free agents who didn't need—in fact, would be confined by—the labor unions and government regulation that had protected their parents.

Sometimes this new political climate led to the explicit rollback of existing labor laws—as in 1997, when the high-tech industry convinced the state of Washington to exempt certain contingent workers from overtime compensation. Often it just resulted in bromides. If you shilled for General Electric, you were a corporate apologist with your eye on the bottom line. If you shilled for Silicon Valley, you were forcing an anachronistic political culture to accept the future. "There will be a need to change the way we think about the workforce," Republican Representative Pete Hoekstra announced in 1997. "We will have to replace a Depression-era mentality of dependence with an empowered worker's confidence to meet the challenges of the future.... Workers must be empowered to 'be all they can be.' The chains of antiquated laws and burdensome restrictions must be lifted."

But now that the NASDAQ has crashed, some 45,000 dot-com employees have been laid off in the last year, and many of those who still have their jobs are toiling under poor conditions for low wages, those "antiquated laws and burdensome restrictions" don't seem quite so bad. All the dazzling new-economy rhetoric notwithstanding, it turns out workers sometimes still need protection. Just ask the employees at Amazon.com.

THE IDEA THAT Amazon.com would be a different sort of workplace began the day you applied for a job. The company's founder, Jeff Bezos, believed that success in the Internet economy required recruiting the most talented people at every level, so he instituted a rigorous vetting process. Even though most of Amazon's entry-level jobs were in warehouses or the customer service department, the company made it clear it was looking for college graduates; applicants were asked to submit their SAT scores, samples of their writing, and letters of recommendation. Then came interviews with current Amazon employees and, for those lucky enough to be hired, a one-month apprenticeship during which they would receive further scrutiny by supervisors and co-workers.

It was an extraordinary gauntlet given that the prize at the end was usually a job fielding complaints from customers. But Bezos believed that prompt, quality customer service was essential to convincing book buyers to shop on the still-novel World Wide Web. So he sought employees who could be trusted not only to master the intricacies of Amazon's sales and distribution system but to communicate effectively. "They had people who were way overqualified for their jobs," says former customer service representative Scott Buss. "You'd call the call center to discuss a book of literature, and you'd get an English major."

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WOOING AND RETAINING these people, Bezos realized, required financial enticements. So, to supplement the relatively modest base salary of $11 to $13 per hour, he gave employees what all good Internet companies did: stock options with the right to vest, or cash in, more of the stock each year they logged with the company. For an employee who joined up when Amazon was still in start-up mode, this was no small thing: In one year, Amazon's stock price rose fivefold, from its initial public offering of $18 per share to nearly $90 per share. "You say, 'My God, I could have $3 million in just three years,'" recalls Mike Daisey, a former Amazon customer service employee. "I had the stock macroed to my keyboard. It would just open up Yahoo! and show me the stock price—and I know tons of people who did the same."

But it wasn't just the promise of riches that drew people like Daisey to Amazon; it was the company's seductive ideology. Amazon had a certain cultlike quality, replete with a messianic leader (Bezos), hordes of enemies (the skeptical business establishment), and masses waiting for deliverance (worldwide consumers). "I really believed in it," says JJ Wandler, who would later become one of Day 2's leaders. Bezos was legendary for visiting customer service centers and warehouses to personally exhort his flock to work harder and faster in Amazon's communal campaign to revolutionize commerce. When *Time* magazine named Bezos its "Person of the Year" in 1999, it cited the overwhelming response to one of his typical warehouse speeches:

> The workers in the first four rows start handing up their white hardhats to be signed too. Then a group of workers behind them gets up and encircles Bezos, proffering hats, dollar bills, scraps of paper—anything—for his signature. Welcome to Bezosville, U.S.A.

Amazon supervisors tried to instill the same devotion, making employees feel not just respected but vital to the enterprise's success. Workers were called "owners" (in recognition of their shareholder status), and mandatory overtime was dubbed "ownertime"—anything to dispel the idea that Amazon was just another retail company. In recognition of the chronic stress its entry-level jobs entailed, Amazon gave its employees free aspirin. December witnessed a regular pilgrimage by Bezos and the rest of the executive pool to the distribution warehouse floor, where the CEO would roll up his sleeves alongside the grunts, stuffing books and CDs into cardboard envelopes so they'd reach Christmas shoppers on time. Even the office furniture had an egalitarian flair. To this day, every desk at Amazon—even those in the top corporate offices—is a knockoff of the one Bezos used in his garage when he first started the company: a wooden door laid on its side, propped up by four pieces of two-by-four lumber.

The progressive spirit expressed itself in work rules, too. Amazon granted its customer service representatives the authority to do almost anything necessary to satisfy the consumer—for example, buying a back-ordered text at the local bookstore or shipping a CD via messenger so a customer would get it more quickly. Amazon encouraged employees to attend "Talk Your Boss's Ear Off meetings" on everything from corporate strategy to what sodas belonged in the company vending machines. To keep the brightest employees on board, Amazon promised not just stock options but the prospect of advancement. "We were like, 'Who here wants to be a vice president?'" laughs Daisey. "'Who here wants to be a manager? OK, you,' and so on." And while Amazon drove its employees hard, demanding long workweeks and requiring overtime, it also let them set the exact schedule. "The general atmosphere was so laid-back and flexible," remembers Buss, who started working at Amazon in 1998. "They trusted you to do your job, and everybody did."

BUT NOT EVERYBODY considered Amazon a worker's paradise. In 1998, *Seattle Weekly*, the local alternative newspaper, ran a memoir by a fired Amazon employee who suggested working conditions there were "worthy of the Electronic Sweatshop Seal of Approval." In a subsequent *Weekly* exposé on life in Amazon's Seattle warehouse, a former temporary employee complained of sweltering conditions during the summer, with employees passing out, even vomiting. (Amazon denies the allegations.) Winter brought its own problems: During the holiday season, mandatory overtime forced customer service employees to work weekends in a downtown building with erratic heat.

In November 1998, frustration with such conditions finally prompted one employee, Christopher Bowling, to contact the Washington Alliance of Technology Workers, a.k.a. WashTech. WashTech was Seattle's affiliate of the Communications Workers of America—Local 37083, to be precise—though it bore little resemblance to other local unions. Founded just a few months earlier by three former Microsoft temporary employees, WashTech's primary focus was adapting unionism to an industry in which contingent work was the norm and unionization seemed alien. And, in fact, WashTech's initial efforts to reach out to Amazon workers—through a report on working conditions and an online employee survey—were met with limited enthusiasm. While WashTech claims that management intimidated employees from speaking out, it's likely that, for most of the Amazon workforce, things still felt pretty good—good enough that bringing in organized labor seemed unnecessary. Buss remembers that, at a meeting in the summer of 1999 where a supervisor raised the union issue, about 95 percent of the people reacted negatively—including himself. "[I thought], 'Who would bring that up here?' I just rolled my eyes and couldn't believe that this wonderful thing we'd found could be interrupted by bringing in a union."

That was before Joe Galli. Even as Amazon was becoming the Internet's first, and biggest, mass retailer—now selling not just books and music, but housewares, toys, and electronics—the company continued to hemorrhage money. And some of the very things essential to employee creativity—for example, the lack of formal budgets—were fueling the higher operating costs. So, after years of defiantly ignoring Wall Street's advice that the company push harder for profitability, in June Bezos hired an old-economy corporate exec, Galli, to be his chief operating officer. Galli, who had spent the last

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19 years at Black & Decker, wasted no time in imposing business discipline. The days when Amazon employees hired messengers on their own authority were over, as *Fortune* reported; now expenses required supervisor approval. Flexible customer service shifts were next to go: Soon managers were setting the schedules, employees say, with workers bidding for the best slots based on seniority. Amazon still promised to promote from within, but Galli began bringing in managers from Delta Air Lines and NBC. Says former employee Peter Perry, "They gradually made us feel more like employees, not owners."

That feeling only increased in January 2000, when Amazon eliminated 150 jobs. Downsized workers were told the news and then given an hour to pack their belongings before they were escorted off the premises. On their own, the layoffs might not have been such a big deal: This was, after all, the famously fluid new economy. But even as Amazon was letting go Seattle workers, it was preparing to expand its customer service operations in two cheaper labor markets, West Virginia and North Dakota. Then came word, in July, that Amazon had reached an agreement with a firm called Daksh.com: Workers in New Delhi, India, making about one-tenth the salary of their Seattle counterparts, were to begin handling customers' e-mails. Galli stepped down as COO the day after Amazon announced its India deal internally, but disgruntled employees couldn't help but notice that he had made $8 million in signing bonuses alone—at a time when their stock options were plummeting.

SUDDENLY, EVEN EMPLOYEES like Buss, strongly anti-union just a few months earlier, began to reconsider. They could live without the money or they could live without the inspiring job, but they couldn't live without both. And so, in October, a new group of employees, including Alan Barclay, contacted WashTech and plotted an organizing strategy. They held a series of meetings in people's homes. Via e-mail or in person, they'd invite a few co-workers to each meeting, calling it a "party" so as not to tip off supervisors. Finally, on November 15, they held an open meeting at an independent movie theater in the city's University District. Some 60 employees attended—representing about 15 percent of the customer service workforce—and, to nearly everybody's surprise, they voted unanimously to go forward with a union effort and ratify the project's name, Day 2.

Knowing that word about such a large gathering was bound to leak, Day 2 issued a press release the next day, announcing its intention to organize Amazon's customer service department. It included a mission statement which read: "Quality customer service requires professional, well-trained individuals that have job security, compensation that reflects our skills and commitment to the company, respect, career development opportunities, continued education and a voice. Amazon.com cannot sustain the standard of excellence that it has attained with anything less than a true commitment to these core values." In short, the employees wanted what they thought they were getting when they joined Amazon in the first place.

It took less than a day for Amazon to launch its counter-attack. It began in the lunchroom of the Decatur building, where most of the customer service employees worked. The occasion was an "all hands" meeting, which meant it was open to anybody, at any level. About 150 employees crammed into the room, crowding around tables and sitting on the floor, while a group of supervisors—and a few company lawyers—stood along the wall by the vending machines. The meeting's ostensible purpose was to address employee grievances. But management didn't exactly go out of its way to solicit criticism, by most accounts. "I stood with my hand in the air for an hour, and they would not call on me" says Wandler, who had outed himself as a union supporter by signing the Day 2 press release. "They looked me in the eye, and called on people in other sections."

OF COURSE, FOR much of the time managers weren't answering questions at all: They were simply attacking the union. Bringing in organized labor, they said, would turn Amazon into a more regimented workplace, where lunch hours were fixed and you could be fired if you didn't heed union guidelines. The union might order employees to strike against their will, the managers said, WashTech was only interested in their dues money, and so on. At least one employee, Michelle Gray, also spoke out against the union, arguing that Amazon was already a place that valued employee input—and that the divisiveness a union would bring could destroy that. "Amazon is in such a growth period," Gray would tell me later. "This whole thing is brand new. We need to be able to change with the times. A union would, I believe, limit that."

The workers who had attended the Day 2 meeting earlier in the week had a rather different reaction. As it happened, one of the promotional materials WashTech had circulated was an old yellow pamphlet titled "Our Boss Said We Didn't Need a Union ... What Will Yours Say?" With its photos of men with wide lapels, bushy mustaches, and Afros, it looked like something that had been printed in the 1970s—something, as Buss puts it, "so corny the Brady Bunch wouldn't get near it." Yet, sure enough, just about every argument Amazon supervisors had made against the union was right there in the pamphlet, along with a rejoinder. Amazon, the great Internet pioneer, was literally taking a page from the '70s anti-union playbook. "There was more support right after that meeting than any other time, because employees realized that management was trying to scare us," said Tricia Phillips, a senior member of the customer service department. "It was really insulting. It was like being in elementary school."

It was only the beginning of Amazon's campaign against the union. Mindful of their public image, Amazon officials kept their appeals in the press high-minded: "We think there's a role for unions in society," Bezos told CNN, "but we don't think we need them at Amazon.com." Inside, they were less delicate. They distributed pamphlets that said, "Be Smart. Don't Sign a Union Card," and they set up an internal website alerting supervisors to warning signs that workers might be plotting to organize. Among those listed: "hushed conversations when you approach which have not occurred

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before," or "small group huddles breaking up in silence on the approach of the supervisor," or excessive time spent in the rest rooms. The material was meant for management only, but it found its way into the hands of *The New York Times*, which called the site "a rare internal glimpse at how a company is fighting off a union."

When I visited last month, it was hard to tell whether these tactics had eroded support for the union. What was clear, though, was that Day 2 still had a ways to go. Under U.S. labor law, a union must go through a two-step process to win certification. First, it must collect signatures in support of the union from at least 30 percent of the workforce and petition the National Labor Relations Board to hold an election. If, in that election, a majority of employees vote for the union, the board certifies it as the employees' appointed bargaining representative. Day 2's leaders figured that they'd need more than 120 signatures to reach the 30 percent threshold—employers often challenge some signatures—and that they had somewhere between 70 and 100.

Needless to say, last week's layoffs made the matter moot. Although WashTech insists the organizing effort will go forward, it's hard to imagine it succeeding now that most of its organizers have been let go. In theory, the NLRB could deem the firings an illegal attempt to stymie the union. But such things are notoriously hard to prove.

BILL RUSSELL

Disgruntled Amazonians claim the company is undercutting its long-term viability by outsourcing labor and thus imperiling quality. Maybe. But in the short run Amazon needs to make money. And there's no question that outsourcing to North Dakota and India will, in the immediate future, improve the bottom line. Amazon, in other words, is doing what it needs to do to survive. Even Bezos admits it: His oft-quoted business-strategy-cum-mantra "Get big fast" has given way, he says, to a new one: "Make some great cash, baby."

Like it or not, that's the way capitalism works. But if Amazon is going to behave like General Electric, its workers should have the same protections they'd have at General Electric, including the right to organize unions and the "chains of antiquated laws and burdensome restrictions" politicians such as Hoekstra have been so eager to dump. It turns out that America's lack of universal health care—which increases the cost of employing U.S. workers and thus leads auto and steel companies to outsource abroad—has the same effect on new-economy companies. Amazon workers would also have benefited from greater government investments in technical training and from workplace regulations that protect against repetitive stress injuries (protections the Clinton administration pushed through last year over loud objections by Republicans and corporations).

In short, Amazon's workers could have used a lot of the same protections as old-economy workers, because, whether they or their employers wanted to admit it, they were a lot like old-economy workers. While the tech boom may have helped thicken the middle class with well-educated, reasonably well-paid "knowledge workers," and while there is still a demand for workers to fill the most difficult, most lucrative programming positions, many new-economy jobs still revolve around basic service and support work—more, certainly, than new-economy boosters let on. In Washington state, for example, the software lobby boasts that the average annual salary of high-tech workers exceeds $200,000. But that figure is grossly misleading, because the Washington state government puts many "Internet economy" jobs into more traditional categories, such as retail or temporary office help. According to Julie Farb, research director at Seattle's Worker Center AFL-CIO, throwing those people into the mix would bring the average wage much closer to what you'd find in traditional industries. "Taking away the perks and the New Age rhetoric exposes a reality that has become clearer since the Nasdaq meltdown of last spring," Kim Girard observes in a new issue of *Business 2.0*. "In the New Economy as in the Old, many jobs aren't so great."

A week after the Amazon layoffs, I got back in touch with Michelle Gray, the outspoken anti-union employee I'd met in January. A tattooed 24-year-old with double-pierced ears, Gray had a blunt take on Amazon and job security. "I don't feel [Amazon] can guarantee anything, and that's OK," she had said back in January. "I don't guarantee to the company I'll be here forever." I wondered whether being laid off had altered Gray's view of employer-employee relations. It hadn't. "It happens," she said matter-of-factly.

It helps that Gray is young enough to view starting over as more an opportunity than a setback. But it's also no coincidence that she started working at Amazon well after most of the union organizers did. By the time she arrived, in mid-1999, Amazon was already tamping down its rhetoric about revolutionizing the workplace and was treating employee-owners more like plain old employees. Gray never really viewed her customer service job, which she said consisted of being "a professional apologizer," as anything more than just that: a job. If Michelle Gray never grew disillusioned, it's partly because she never developed illusions in the first place. She understood that capitalism can be cold, even in the new economy. A pretty jaded perspective? You bet. And it happens to be right. ■

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

The Detective in Search of Himself

THE SWISS WRITER Friedrich Dürrenmatt is best known here for his plays, such as *The Visit* and *The Physicists*, organisms that seem to turn slowly as they proceed to reveal knives, gleaming, almost smiling. Dürrenmatt's other writing is less known here, especially his novels: "paradoxically contrived detective novels," one critic calls them. Dürrenmatt himself said:

> A story is thought through to its end when it has taken its worst possible turn. The worst possible turn is not foreseeable. It comes about through chance.... The more methodically men proceed, the more drastically chance affects them.

This cold-steel fatalism is the center of a Dürrenmatt novel that has just been filmed in the United States.

The Pledge (Warner Bros.) was adapted for the screen by Jerzy Kromolowski and Mary Olson-Kromolowski who transposed the locale from Switzerland to Nevada. The adapters dropped the method of the novel—a man telling a story to a person he has just met, an ancient and sometimes chromatically useful device—in order to close in on the protagonist. But they have kept much of the shape of the original story, altering it to allow for particular character development.

The initial situation is a cliché of crime fiction, deliberately chosen by Dürrenmatt, I'd say, so that it could be used surprisingly. A veteran detective is just about to retire when a crime happens that engages him. The retiree, whose name is Jerry Black, goes from his retirement party with his colleagues when a murder is reported—a little girl has been raped and murdered up in the snowy mountains. Someone has to inform the child's parents, and Jerry does the dreadful job. The child's mother, wrought to extremity, holds a cross before Jerry and asks him to swear by his soul's salvation that he will find the murderer. Jerry swears. The fact that he swears thusly only a few hours before his retirement is the nub of the story in character terms. Possibly Jerry agrees out of shared horror and pain mixed with professional pride, but as the story proceeds, the motives, the detective's very texture, take on other shades.

The police arrest a man suspected of the crime. This man, an Indian who is mentally dim and has a bad record, soon confesses, and then commits suicide. Yet Jerry, who was supposed to be flying off on a retirement holiday, does not board the plane. Why not? Does he believe that the dead suspect was bullied into confessing? That is part of the reason, surely, but more develops. Jerry goes back to his office and, against his former colleagues' wishes, begins an investigation of his own. He digs up three previous murders of little girls in this vicinity, triangulates the area on a map, and buys a filling station in the center as a vantage point.

A brutalized woman and her small daughter eventually come to live with him, happily, affectionately. But Jerry is so obsessed with his pledge that he fantasticates dangers around this child. He ends by using the girl as live bait to trap a man whom he—in fact, somewhat validly—suspects. The last harsh touch is that this suspect dies in a car crash and we never learn if Jerry was mad or not. But the mother flees with her daughter, revolted by the way Jerry has used the girl. Jerry is left alone, disintegrating, bereft of purpose. It has become clearer and clearer through the film that his reason—unconscious, perhaps—for making the pledge was as much for a kind of examination of himself as a pursuit of justice. He swore by his soul's salvation, so something more than police justice was involved. We never learn precisely what he wanted—only that he didn't get it. Jerry remains something of a mystery to us and to himself.

A glimpse of the story's ending is where the film begins. The very first shot is of a ragged shoe on a sockless foot and a hand reaching down to adjust it. It's Jerry. Then, as dark birds scatter overhead, he sits in the sun against the wall of his deserted filling station, muttering incomprehensibly to himself and nibbling at whiskey. The picture then shows us how he arrived here.

We are fixed throughout—despite a couple of small distentions—not only by the story itself but by the way it is told. The director was Sean Penn, who has shown gifts in acting and who has more subtle gifts in this field. His first directing work, *The Indian Runner*, was a burrow into a substratum of our society. *The Crossing Guard* was a ruptured piece of symbolism, but at least it was an attempt to get off the ground, to soar. Now, in *The Pledge*, Penn fulfills the promises of his first two pictures. He never takes a false directorial step.

The heat and cold of Nevada are his first textural increments. After the sun-baked opening at the filling station, the camera speeds across a frozen lake toward what turns out to be a fishing shack, within which a slightly younger Jerry is catching fish and sipping whiskey. This sharp shift is taciturn and engaging. Then Jerry drives down out of the snow to his tropical town, while the child's murder is being discovered back in the snowy mountains. This interplay of climates continues through the film as if to convey contradictions in the universe.

Then see the way Penn handles the suicide of the suspect in the police station, all the action confined within a narrow space that seems to increase pressure on the deranged man. (And note the hysterics of the policeman from whom the suspect stole the gun.) As the film moves along, as Jerry visits people in his private investigation, note how smoothly Penn handles a series of what could be called Raymond Chandler touches: devices to iconize new characters. A detective does weight-lifting in his office as Jerry consults him; a filling-station owner has an overweight daughter who keeps stuffing herself with food. Penn seems to be tipping his hat wryly to Chandler conventions.

Two "cameo" scenes form a contrast. Jerry visits the murdered girl's Scandinavian grandmother, played by Vanessa Redgrave. The old woman has already subsumed the horror into the consolations of a Hans Christian Andersen story. In her brief appearance, Redgrave transforms her scene into one moment of a complete life. Then Jerry visits a psychologist played by Helen Mirren. Mirren is difficult to take as an integer of that community or of this story. The woman asks questions that open apertures in Jerry, but Mirren's performance is only a turn by a visiting star.

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The demented Indian suspect, who eliminates himself early, is played by Benicio Del Toro, a long way off from his charming Mexican detective in *Traffic*. Del Toro has been acting in films for five or six years, and now, suddenly, he has become a very valuable asset.

Jack Nicholson plays Jerry. This wonderful actor, apparently sent by Providence to be the archetypal American screen realist of his time, gives a performance that puzzles. Nicholson's concern to render the complexity in Jerry often renders him nearly impassive. His acting seems the result of a struggle to understand Jerry rather than to create him. Nicholson fills the screen whenever he is on—it couldn't possibly be otherwise—but his mutterings at the end as at the beginning, again with the scatter of black birds overhead, seem as compounded of the actor's confusion as of the character's. Still, the screenwriters have made their own use of Dürrenmatt's idea of chance. A sense of the complexity of human motives, of the illusion that any motive can be absolutely pure, of chance as ultimate arbiter, hangs in the Nevada air as in the Swiss air.

A salute to Chris Menges, the English cinematographer (who has also been a director); he seems to draw the climate of a scene through his camera on to the screen. And the score by Hans Zimmer and Klaus Badelt floats in strands of ambiguity. ■

Jed Perl on Art

Basic Instinct

EDOUARD MANET, THE painter who stirred up legendary controversies among Parisians in the 1860s with bluntly sexual images such as *Olympia* and *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, brought an entirely different kind of deviltry, the deviltry of a slapdash dreamer, to the small paintings of a few pieces of fruit or a modest bouquet of flowers that occupied much of his attention in the years leading up to his death in 1883. There is an electrifying informality to these paintings that Manet produced very quickly, using a variety of painterly techniques, including feathery-delicate brushstrokes, an impasto that sometimes suggests sea foam, and flickering calligraphic flourishes with a paradoxically knife-edge brilliance, like soft daggers. The nearly two dozen canvases from the early 1880s that fill the second half of "Manet: The Still-Life Paintings," at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore until April 22, are the artistic equivalent of serious flirtations. The colors and the textures spell seduction: silky grays, creamy pale purples, sharp greens, oranges, whites. Going through this intimately scaled and perfectly paced show, I began by feeling curious, but pretty soon I felt provoked. These paintings have a way of getting under your skin. They are arguably all surface effect, but these are very potent surfaces, at once fiery and cool.

The show is a surprise, in that many have been inclined to believe that still life played a relatively minor role in Manet's career. Of the 221 works listed in the catalogue of the large Manet retrospective that came to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1983, only a handful of pictures could be described as still lifes. The organizers of the present exhibition are eager to point out that some twenty percent of Manet's four-hundred-plus oil paintings are still lifes, but one must remember that many of these are among his smallest works. For Manet, who brought a novelistic eye to the social drama of nineteenth-century Paris, men and women were always the essential subject. Painting the people he knew was his way of painting himself into the center of the action. And of course Manet was well aware that if he was going to go head to head with the Old Masters—and for a man of his throw-down-the-gauntlet ambitions nothing else would do—the figure, which had been their subject, had to be his subject, too.

Manet was born in 1832, a child of the upper echelons of the bourgeoisie, and the fact that he was pretty much able to live as he pleased on family money gave him the freedom to play an incendiary role in the Parisian art world of the 1860s and 1870s. When he died at the age of fifty-one, almost certainly a victim of the syphilis that he contracted in his youth,

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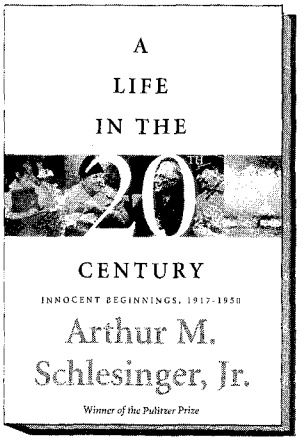

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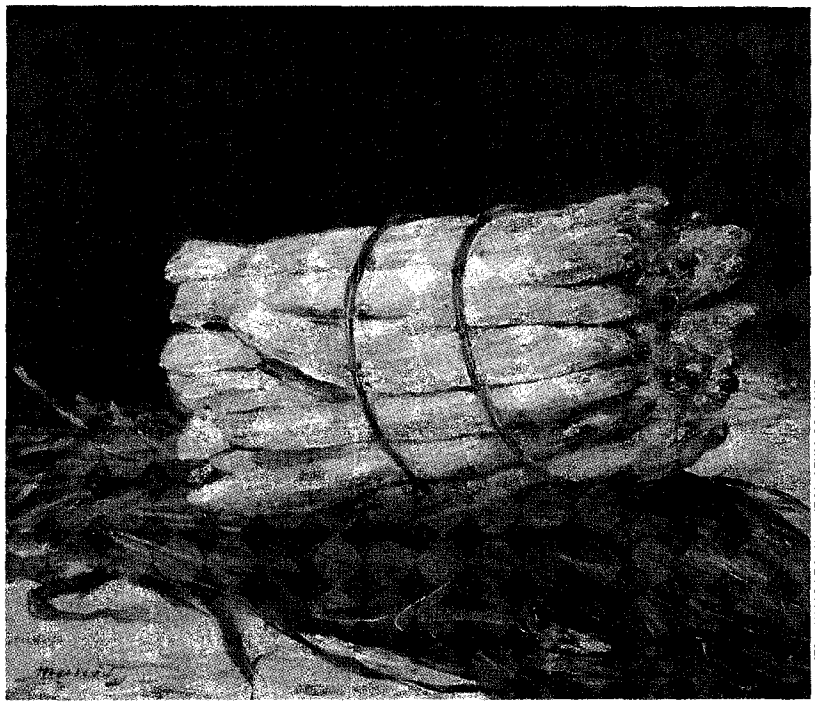
his career had the air of unresolved possibility that sometimes hovers around creative people who barely live into middle age. From the start he was a virtuoso of the brush; and critics sometimes found themselves bemused, for they sensed that the proficiency which enabled him to give his paintings an unsettlingly sketch-like panache could also be used to outwit more conservative artists at their own games, as Manet was wont to do from time to time. Manet's casual hedonism—say, his idea of painting two naked women at a picnic with several fashionably dressed men—combined elements of frankness and fantasy in ways that could leave Parisians wondering exactly what he had in mind. Even his friends weren't sure. Manet was not inclined to pronounce on artistic matters, and seemed content to leave the mystery intact.

The experimental informality that was already an element in the figure paintings of Delacroix and Courbet came to the fore in Manet's work, so that his canvases turned out to be a part of the new atmosphere in which the Impressionists, who were his friends, came of age. Yet Manet's relationship to avant-gardism, an idea that was relatively young in his time, was always somewhat ambiguous. Working in the 1870s with a light palette that he adapted from the Impressionists, he could be described as the first painter who saw in Impressionism a new kind of decorative preciosity. At the same time, some of his work, especially the study of a well-fed, pipe-smoking gent called *Le Bon Bock* (1873), seemed almost reactionary. There were those who said that Manet wanted to make his peace with official taste.

There is an air of aggression about much of Manet's work. But the aggression is often mixed with a desire just to sketch in or even glance over certain matters, and this suggests passivity, and maybe even obtuseness. You feel a passive-aggressive attitude in the paintings of Manet's that have become landmarks in nineteenth-century art, but perhaps you feel it even more in some of his smaller works: in his sketches of brasseries and cabarets, in his off-the-cuff landscapes—and in his most informal still lifes.

For Manet, still life is a part of the human drama, a sort of sidelight or comment or footnote or postscript tossed off as people go about their busy lives. Some of his best-known still lifes were literally offered as thank-you notes to friends. He gave the painter Berthe Morisot, who later became his sister-in-law, a small canvas of a bouquet of violets and a fan, after she sat for a portrait in which she wore some violets. When the collector Charles Ephrussi (who was one of the models for Charles Swann in *Remembrance of Things Past*) paid more than the asking price for a painting of a large bunch of asparagus, Manet sent Ephrussi another painting, of a single stalk of asparagus resting on a marble surface.

The charming little stories that relate to these paintings are rehearsed over and over again in the Manet literature, and they point to a larger truth about the artist's view of still life. For Manet, still life was an intensely immediate response to fast-breaking events—a kind of conversation that a person has with his surroundings. Nothing could have been further from the idea of still life as a self-contained world-within-our-world that Chardin had defined one hundred years earlier, and that Cézanne would soon redefine. If still life is the peripheral brought to center stage, Manet has a way of leaving his audience in some suspense as to whether he is going to be willing to do so. He generally wishes to maintain the old idea of the centrality of the figure, while from time to time allowing his focus to wander.



COURTESY WALLRAF-RICHARTZ MUSEUM, COLOGNE

Edouard Manet, "Bunch of Asparagus," 1880

"Manet: The Still-Life Paintings," which was organized by the American Federation of Arts and the Musée d'Orsay in Paris (where it was seen last fall), does an extraordinary job of situating these works in the broader context of the artist's achievement. Looking at the catalogue before I saw the show, I wondered if the idea of including a number of figure paintings in which inanimate objects play supporting roles would make the exhibition somewhat confused. But these works in the first couple of galleries—they include Manet's famous portrait of Zola in his study, where a Japanese print and a reproduction of Manet's *Olympia* are casually attached to the wall—serve beautifully to underscore Manet's vision of still life as part of the story of a person's life.

George Mauner, the art historian at Pennsylvania State University who organized the show, emphasizes Manet's early interest in traditional ideas about the allegorical properties of inanimate objects. In Mauner's catalogue essay the point is pushed much too hard, until we are confronted with a diagram of Manet's *Portrait of Zacharie Astruc* (1866) sectioned off into quadrants in accordance with some sort of Platonic scheme that suggests French structuralism at its most delirious. But the exhibition itself is soundly reasoned, and museumgoers can move easily from the handful of fruit in *Young Man with Cherries* (1858), where the cherries suggest the sense of taste, to Manet's later glimpses of apples and roses in which older emblematic meanings are transformed into a sort of allegorical stream-of-consciousness.

The exhibition begins with still life at its most playfully spontaneous, in a painting of a basket piled with a guitar and a flat-brimmed black Spanish hat. This four-foot-wide work has the humorous impact of an oversized vignette. It hung over the door of Manet's studio in the 1860s, and announced the artist's strong Hispanophile tastes. Manet was in the forefront of a Parisian vogue for all things Spanish; he loved the music, the costumes, and of course the way Velázquez, Zurbarán, and Goya worked brilliant shots of color against strong, clear expanses of browns and grays.

Allegorical interpretations of still life

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are a key element in classic Spanish painting, but Manet takes those older symbolic meanings and personalizes and psychologizes them. Where for earlier artists—and for more conservative artists in the nineteenth century—a particular flower might suggest purity or virtue, for Manet what counted was who had given him the blossoms. By the nineteenth century, allegorical meanings had been largely sentimentalized; and one might say that what Manet did was to take the sugariness out of the sentiment. When he is sugary, it's with a wink. He gives what was once known as the Language of Flowers an unembarrassed insouciance.

MANET'S STILL LIFES are least effective in the 1860s, which is the period when he was inclined to create more or less traditionally self-contained arrangements of objects on a table. When these works feature fish ready for the kitchen, they bring to mind the related subject matter in certain paintings that Courbet completed a few years later. Many people admire Manet's thick, fluid brushwork, but I find his painterly attack, at least in the still lifes of the 1860s, somewhat lightweight. When Courbet examined several dying trout, they became the whole world for him. His dazzling work with the palette knife gave the forms weight and deliberateness: there is something startlingly, freshly tragic in Courbet's fish, in their glistening fins, in their eyes that seem still—just barely—alive. Courbet explores a range of feelings that Rembrandt had first discovered when studying a side of beef. As for Manet, he does not seem to want to get involved. I had the feeling, as I looked at his fish and his big copper pot and his lemons, that he just wanted to get on with the feast.

Since ancient times, when the Greek painters vied to see who could paint a bunch of grapes or a curtain with eye-fooling verisimilitude, still life has been regarded as a touchstone of artistic truth. Manet's relationship with that august tradition is a strange combination of reverence and insolence. He obviously admires Chardin's way of giving a breath-of-life immediacy to objects by using almost abstractly disconnected strokes of paint. Indeed, Manet prizes Chardin's methods so greatly that he keeps upping the ante, until his painterly flourishes sometimes seem to be alienated from naturalistic depiction.

Manet can leave you with the suspicion that when he looks at a pile of apples or a bouquet of flowers what he sees is an opportunity to take off on some wild painterly spree. It is not that he doesn't give a damn, but it is not necessarily clear what he gives a damn about. Looking at Manet's paintings of peaches or roses, I find that I am more interested in figuring out how he painted an object than in what it ultimately looks like. When I think of the white lilacs in one of the last canvases in the show, I remember the jabbing impact of the brush—the top of a stiff bristle brush, shoved at the canvas?—as much as the haze of blooms.

Manet is a virtuoso who can heroicize trivialities, and there are certainly mixed motives involved. He wants to make small things loom large, but he also wants to call attention to his ability to do so. There is an element of the genius-phony about Manet; he tickles us with little painterly tricks that have no business being quite as interesting as they are. He certainly shows us what he can do with the mirror-brilliant reflections of apples on a polished wooden tabletop, or the shimmering spectacle of stems immersed in water seen through crystal vases in some of the very latest works. I found myself lingering over these effects; I see why they leave many museumgoers awestruck. There is a kick to the way that Manet takes off with his brushwork. The intensity of these paintings has to do with the vagaries of the brush, with the extent to which the reflections on the polished wood or the stems in the crystal vase pull our attention away from the apples or the flowers. One can argue that Manet is intentionally decentralizing his motifs; in this sense, he leads the way to Bonnard. And yet there is also something more anarchic going on here. There is a sense of virtuosity as pure distraction.

The idea of virtuosity as pure distraction has a history, of course; and that history is a part of Manet's paintings, too. Few museumgoers will miss Manet's salutes to Asian painting, which one feels in the stark simplicity with which he presents certain objects and in the teetering asymmetries of many of his compositions. At least one watercolor included here, *Cucumber with Leaves* (1880), could easily pass muster in a show of nineteenth-century Japanese art. Manet's cultivation of spontaneity and simplification is related to a widespread rejection among nineteenth-century intellectuals of the growing commercialization of Western culture. Asian art was felt to reflect a more relaxed, contemplative world view; so, too, in a somewhat different way, was the eighteenth-century French art that was also a strong influence in Manet's still life paintings. His soft grays and white-infused violets and bright

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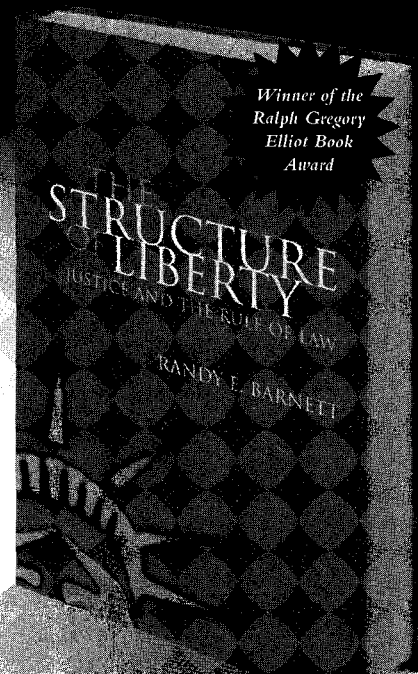

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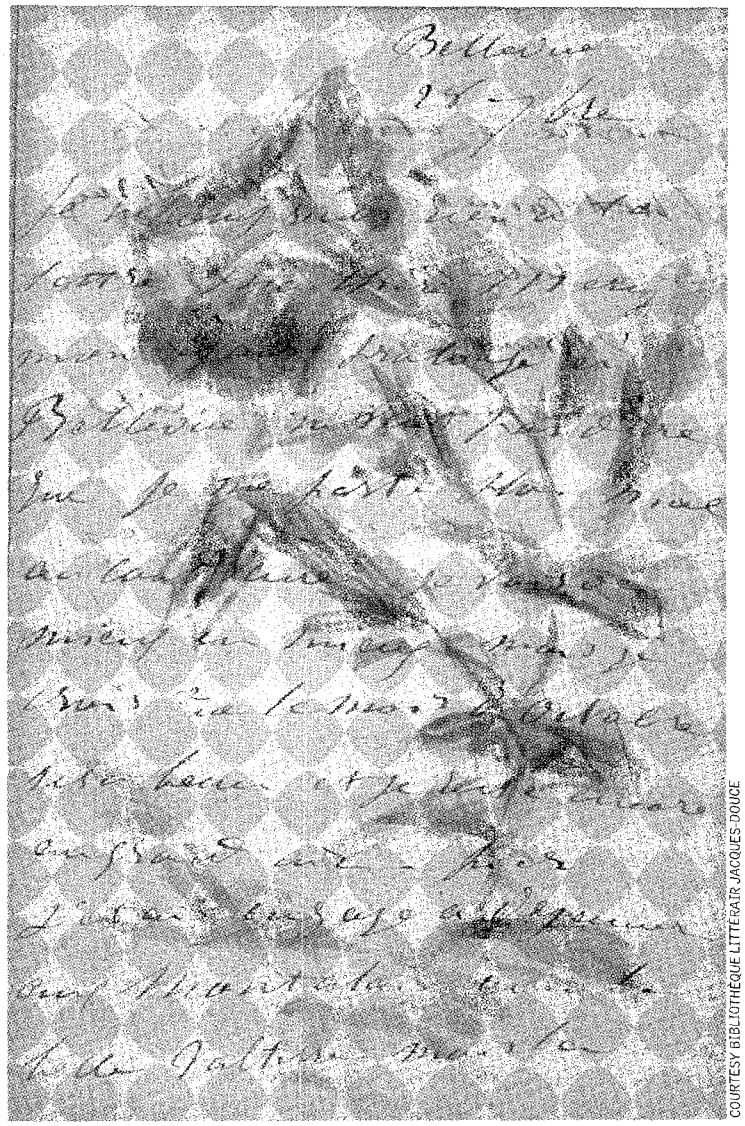
oranges and greens suggest eighteenth-century pastels; the whole cycle of late flower paintings can be interpreted as an homage to Chardin's famous bouquet, though Manet sometimes describes his flowers with a ditheriness that is closer to Fragonard.

No painter exemplifies more forcefully than Manet the exquisite taste of the Goncourt brothers, who wrote so movingly about Chardin, Watteau, and the Japanese printmakers. By the 1880s, however, Japonisme and the rococo revival were well on their way to being clichés, and what Manet does in his wonderful paintings is to give a looser, more instinctive inflection to an aesthete's nostalgia-infused taste. The freewheeling historical references that circulate around his most casual works give his paintings of fruits and flowers a hallucinogenic sparkle. You may feel that even as Manet was feasting his eyes on some flowers sent to him by a friend, he was also fantasizing about the long-gone workshops of Hokusai and Fragonard.

The late Manets are at once plain and fancy—like signatures dashed off with utilitarian speed and lots of crazy flourishes. In his later years, when his declining health was forcing him to spend more time outside of his beloved Paris searching for cures, Manet sent delightful illustrated letters to friends in the capital, and here the telegraphic images have a kind of fantastic element, as if Manet were tossing off reality itself. A number of these letters—with watercolors of a snail, a plum, a sprig of blossoms—are included in the show, and they feel like warm-ups for the paintings of the last years.

In the watercolors Manet zeroes in on a single element, so that a plum or a blossom just seems to float there on the page. And the sense of composition in the late still life paintings is often not much more deliberate. The symmetry of a number of these last canvases is as much a form of anti-composition as the asymmetry of some others. Manet has little patience with the architecture of a painting; he seems to be saying that all he now wants to paint are these few objects, and damn everything else. (His poor health often left him unable to do much more.) These paintings can leave artists who are more concerned about pictorial structure looking like academic grinds. Manet's late still lifes may strike many museumgoers as being what they would paint if they could paint—something breezily naturalistic, something that just leaps into life.

What finally holds us in the late Manets is a kind of instability or fluidity, an appearance of ease in the way that means are marshaled and ends are pursued. There is a side of Manet that wants to tell the truth about nature and nothing but the truth, but there is another side of him that wants to play with paint for its own sake; and his urges, which can look contradictory one moment, and consistent the next, have a breathless, unsettling excitement. The paintings, which just hold there before us with a daylit brilliance, can feel like lucky tosses of the dice. They are life studies, but what has been observed is life as a game of chance. The paintings suggest transparency, but Manet's virtuosity is so much a matter of his self-regard that the work turns out to be anything but psychologically transparent.



COURTESY BIBLIOTHÈQUE LITTÉRAIR JACQUES-DOUCE

Edouard Manet, "Letter to Méry Laurent," 1880

"Manet: The Still-Life Paintings" is an enjoyably offbeat view of this essential nineteenth-century artist, but for museumgoers who have not taken a long look at *Olympia* or *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* in the Musée d'Orsay the show might be a little like meeting a person on a vacation and having only a vague idea of what they do in "real life." In the big retrospective that came to the Met in 1983 we saw a very different Manet, and although he was the legendary Manet, I am not convinced that he was the "real" Manet either. He was an artist who frequently bit off more than he could chew, who tried anything, who sometimes simply seemed to be flailing around. You saw the origins of Manet's gigantic avant-garde reputation, and at times that reputation looked pretty thin. The fascination of the still life show is that within its reduced compass some of the artist's stronger qualities are magnified. We come especially close to certain animating principles in Manet's art—to the energy of his attack, to the impulsiveness and also the trickiness of his feelings. You might say that the show puts you in touch with some of Manet's basic instincts.

In many ways I prefer this smaller and more specific show to the full retrospective, which fit all too comfortably into the New York art world of the early 1980s. Back then Neo-Expressionism was the hot development, and Manet's knack for cutting a fashionable but controversial figure could seem like a model for artists such as David Salle and Julian Schnabel, who were cooking up their own off-hand painterly extravaganzas complete with jazzy allusions to contemporary culture. I never saw anything but fatuousness in Salle's and Schnabel's work, but I did not think that their admirers were entirely wrong when they traced a line back to Manet. If Salle was dreaming up juxtapositions

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that were just improbable enough to seem like some kind of profundity, wasn't that a little like what Manet had sometimes done, only with a more truly destabilizing kind of anarchic zing? And now, two decades later, when more and more people have begun to suspect that Salle's and Schnabel's work is merely overbearing, Manet's hulking "Painter of Modern Life" ambitions may not seem quite so alluring, either.

SO THIS WINTER Manet is returning to our shores as a sort of intimist or miniaturist. Is this the essential Manet? I don't think we will ever really know. Such questions have been asked since the artist's own day, when even those who were close to him seemed at a loss as to exactly why he painted the absurdist picnic of *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* or handled so many areas of his paintings in an almost slapdash manner. Manet closely followed all the aesthetic debates among his artistic and literary friends, but he did not come down in favor of one or another idea, or throw in his fortunes with Zola or Baudelaire or Mallarmé. Instead he seemed to keep painting his way through all kinds of ideas, so that his work ended up being thematically porous or absorbent. His freewheeling brushwork, with its sense of means alienated from ends, could suggest a kind of idealistic detachment, or a premonition of Dadaist nihilism, or the beginning of abstract formalism. Many artists inspire wildly contradictory interpretations, but the strange thing about Manet is that the controversies do not circulate around the edges of his work. They go to the very core of his achievement.

There is a Rorschach-like quality to much of Manet's works; he does some of this and some of that, and leaves it to us to see how it all adds up. This is what I do not like about him. Frankly, I have never understood how people can speak of Manet as an artist on the same level as Delacroix, Courbet, Corot, or Cézanne. Manet's work is almost too interesting. There are too many ideas circulating around without ever exactly settling down. Spain, Japan, modern life, the theater, friendship, love, lust, fashion, war, death, music, elegance, informality: there hardly seems to be a theme or a subject that Manet did not take up in his relatively brief career, and almost every time there is a casual, let's-try-it spirit that keeps the work lively.

He is an amazing figure, but he refuses to submit to the kind of white-heat creative pressure that gives a work of art an overwhelming clarity. In the end, I would rather look at Delacroix's color, Corot's brushwork, Courbet's eroticism, Van Gogh's Japan, or the riveting view of modern life in Seurat's *Circus Sideshow*. In his later still lifes, however, Manet almost revels in his limitations, with fascinating results. No longer preoccupied with achieving through sheer nerve a dominant position in the art of his age, he turns out to be a towering master of poses and paradoxes and glancing, slippery effects. His interest in virtuosity as an experimental value or a psychological value is emphasized in the still lifes. There is a sophisticated comedy about these tossed-off ambiguities and unresolvable arrangements.

TWO OF THE paintings that held me in the last room of the Baltimore show are vertical panels in which Manet echoes the off-center compositions of Japanese woodblock prints: *Oysters and Champagne Bucket* (1876–77) and *Still Life with Brioche* (1880). In these pictures we hover at the edges of two delicious little meals as Manet bemuses us with his telegraphic powers of suggestion. A cat's face in *Still Life with Brioche* is barely indicated with a scant few black and white strokes. The opulent reflections in the silver champagne bucket are announced with a couple of swirls of gray paint on bare primed canvas.

Still Life with Brioche is Manet's cockeyed salute to Chardin, who painted cats beautifully and a brioche sublimely; Manet arranges his homage so casually that you might regard this as the anti-Chardin—as a dream in which the eighteenth-century master's work returns, only backwards or inside out. As for *Oysters and Champagne Bucket* (which Matisse must have had in mind in some of the gray still lifes that he painted in 1919), this is a wonder of jiggling instability. Nothing—not the oysters, the lemon, the plate, the bucket, the bottle of champagne, the Japanese fan hanging on the wall—is exactly there. The whole composition is dashed off, a love letter to a good meal.

Time and time again in this wonderful show, I looked at a painting and felt as if Manet were saying, "Oh, it's really nothing." But his demurrals registered so loudly, so eloquently, that I could not help but believe that what he really meant was exactly the reverse. More than once, I felt as if I were suspended between a something and a nothing. Manet tosses off his painterly confusions, and damned if they don't float there, like smiling question marks in thin air. I left this terrific exhibition feeling that although I might not have seen a single painting that made complete sense, I had spent a couple of hours bouncing around in painting's upper regions. ■

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Indoctrinology

By SHERWIN B. NULAND

PC, M.D.: How Political Correctness Is Corrupting Medicine by Sally Satel

(Basic Books, 285 pp., $27)

I.

I SERVE ON the advisory committee of a foundation whose many millions of endowment dollars are devoted to the advancement of health research. The trustees' definition of "research" has been kept deliberately flexible and wide, allowing for the support of investigations that range from the most basic studies in biomedical laboratory science all the way to those that fall into the category of public health and even medical sociology. The foundation's statement on grant-making specifically notes that its efforts are to be directed to the public interest, "particularly [to] the underserved, understudied and disadvantaged."

The composition of the committee reflects the diversity of the foundation's goals and interests. Its membership of eight men and three women traverses the spectrum of civic and scientific know-how and activism, from the research bench to the judicial bench, and includes several directors of community agencies. Our function is to advise the two trustees of the endowment, one of whom is a male attorney and the other a female executive vice president of the bank in which the organization's funds are held. I and the chair—whose specialty is internal medicine—are the only physicians on the committee. As might be expected, she and a male surgeon such as myself are likely to view issues from widely dissimilar perspectives. Such differences are among the factors that have made service with this diverse group of outspoken people an interesting and valuable experience over the years.

In 1998, the foundation was approached by a distinguished American university, whose medical school was seeking financial support for a program in women's health. The issue was discussed at several meetings of our committee, and from the very beginning it was apparent that there would be near-unanimous agreement that this was not only an endeavor of great value, but one that would be in keeping with the fondest hopes of the maiden lady (as she would have been called during most of the years she lived) the terms of whose will had left a considerable fortune to endow the fund.

The directors of the proposed program gave very convincing reasons for the necessity of their undertaking. These were carefully reviewed by our committee, most of whom were already familiar with the reports of bias against women patients and physicians that have appeared on numerous occasions in professional and lay periodicals. The elements composing the entire picture of such bias had long been of concern. It was becoming apparent that the establishment of programs such as the one that was already underway in this particular medical school (and several others in the United States) were an ideal corrective.

The descriptions of some of the accusations were unsettling, particularly as they supported certain troubling claims that feminists and others had been making for years: that women are being systematically under-represented in clinical trials of new treatment methods; that the quality of their medical care is less than that of men; that research in diseases that affect primarily men (such as prostate cancer) was being funded much more generously than research into diseases that affect primarily women (such as breast cancer); that women researchers are the subjects of discrimination in the allocation of support from federal and other agencies; that the opportunities for the career development of women physicians and laboratory investigators are far less plentiful than the opportunities for men.

For years, protests against these forms of discrimination had been voiced by medical experts, laypeople, and political figures alike. Dr. Patricia Buffler, the former dean of the Berkeley School of Public Health, had expressed the feelings of many people when she stated a few years earlier that "there is so much outrage that half the human population has been left out" of clinical trials. In 1996, an independent physician-founded organization called the Foundation for Women's Health asserted that "women are invisible in the health care system beyond their reproductive systems. The medical model using male science, male body, male culture is still the norm. Women die unnecessarily due to this male perspective." Perhaps the voice that carried the farthest was Hillary Clinton's, during the time when the former First Lady was directing the effort to reform the American system of health care. In July 1993 she told the assembled members of the Society for Women's Health Research of the "appalling degree to which women were routinely excluded from major clinical trials of most illnesses."

With all of this as background, the motion to support the medical school's request for funding was applauded by every member of the committee but one. This recalcitrant fellow was the only dissenter in an otherwise unanimous recommendation. Stubbornly, he questioned the validity of the generally accepted evidence purporting to demonstrate significant gender bias in health care. He denounced the concept of a women's health initiative as a faddish notion that was acquiring popularity in medical schools only because it had become "politically correct" and was an easy sell to well-intentioned foundations like ours. He went so far as to call the entire project a "boondoggle"—his very word—whose unstated purpose was to help to balance the school's budget, by providing funds to pay the salaries of the participating faculty members and staff. Just as emphatically, he wondered aloud whether some of these personnel might not qualify to be retained were this funding not available. These objections were respectfully heard by the committee, and just as respectfully they were discounted. Without another murmur of dissent, the trustees committed the foundation to fund the women's health program for a total of $6.5 million.

Truth be told, I was the curmudgeonly dissenter. Had a book like Sally Satel's been available during those discussions, I might have convinced a few of my colleagues that they should not be so quick to approve the medical school's proposal. Who knows? The sheer weight of the arguments that Satel provides to refute the conventional political-medical wisdom might even have resulted in a different outcome of our deliberations. I plan to put a copy of her carefully documented study in the hands of the two foundation trustees—not to convince them that they were wrong, but as a lesson in the evaluation of evidence, and as a warning to avoid hopping on bandwagons with square wheels, whose clunking is obscured by the brassy blare of the trumpeting that precedes them.

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II.

THE BANDWAGON THAT Satel would like to stop in its tracks is bumping along toward an ill-defined destination called "social justice," and carrying a variegated group of vociferous critics of "the health profession's failure to make the connection between oppression—by society at large or by the medical establishment itself—and illness." Satel believes that this perception by medicine's critics is ignorant at best and mischievous at worst; that it is also, in the hands of many of them, dangerously self-serving.

Though they share a common goal, the gaudy bandwagon's clamorous riders come from a heterogeneous assortment of backgrounds and serve sundry constituencies. The voices of some are reasonable and temperate; the voices of others are strident and angry. They have names like Donna Shalala and Al Sharpton; Henry Waxman and Barbara Ehrenreich; George Mitchell and Patricia Ireland. In Satel's view, they are all misguided, and some are power-mad.

Theirs is the rhetoric of discontent. The unifying medical theme that underlies all the disparate parts is the perception by its advocates that "injustice produces disease and political empowerment is the cure." Thus Sally Zierler of the Department of Community Health at Brown University calls AIDS a "biological expression of social inequality." In a lecture in 1998 at the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association, she presented five recommendations for curbing the AIDS epidemic: "limit the power of corporations, cap salaries of CEOs, eliminate corporate subsidies, prohibit corporate contributions to politicians, and strengthen labor unions." Rodney Clark of the Department of Psychology at Wayne State University states that emphasizing personal responsibility is a "subtler form of racism." Stephen R. Kandall, chief of neonatology at Beth Israel Medical Center in New York City, says that drug abuse is the "result of manipulation by the media, inappropriate over-medication by physicians or [addicts'] own attempts to cope with social barriers to achieving equality and self-fulfillment." Douglas Smith of the Anti-Psychiatry Coalition, a volunteer group of people who claim to have been harmed by psychiatry, states that "contrary to popular belief, psychiatry is not health care. It is a form of social control." Or, as stated in its most extreme form by one of the philosophy's advocates, Dr. Paula Braverman of the medical school at the University of California at San Francisco, "illness is caused by the power imbalance that characterizes a capitalist society."

IT IS SATEL'S important thesis that such "politically correct" or "PC" medicine ignores or is ignorant of the real causes and the real cures of sickness, and that the proposed remedies of the activists (whom she calls "indoctrinologists" for their proselytizing) not infrequently contribute to the very problems that they are meant to solve. As she observes in her introduction, "PC medicine puts ideology before patients"; and her book is an attempt to point out how this occurs, who is perpetrating it, and what the dangers are—to patients, and to the future of medical progress—if it is not exposed.

Satel has meticulously dissected the arguments of those against whom she enters the lists, and she has chosen her opponents and battlegrounds with care—up to a point. For the most part, she deals with areas in which she has great familiarity as a result of her training in a large university medical center known for its liberal policies, and her current professional role as a psychiatrist treating drug-dependent patients primarily in the setting of the inner city. Hers is a clarion call to be aware of the indoctrinologists' thus-far unimpeded growth in power, to the extent that they can influence standards for admission to medical and nursing schools, the contents of professional journals, and even the direction of medical research and its methods of combating disease. "Most disturbing, their stubborn reluctance to acknowledge each person's responsibility in preserving his own health threatens to reverse many of the gains made by the public health movement in the past century." The refrain of personal responsibility for one's own health runs through Satel's impassioned and intelligent book.

There is a certain irony in this thesis of personal responsibility, which may be a reflection of the polarization, or perhaps the confusion, of our society. At a time when the culture of medical self-help is growing rapidly—and prosperous, well-educated members of the middle class are busily learning about the physiology of their bodies, the relative virtues of aerobic and anaerobic exercise, and the nutritional principles underlying dietary choices, and eagerly seeking medical information on the Internet—the less privileged in American society, especially certain minorities, are being hectored and propagandized by agenda-driven gadflies who claim that most or all health problems are the result of societal inequalities over which the victims have no control. And yet it is evident that there is a great deal of dovetailing in these two seemingly contradictory attempts to reinvent medical practice. They both originate in a spirit of activism, with the intention of overthrowing or at least revising a care system that is seen as autocratic, patriarchal, and distanced from the individuals whom it is meant to serve.

YET THERE IS a significant difference. One approach is based on the role of the individual in taking charge of her or his own health, while the other calls for vast changes in the economic, political, and social landscape without which any person's own efforts to remain free of illness are doomed to failure. One approach demands personal accountability; the other eschews it. One of them asks the individual to grow closer to science, the better to comprehend the somatic realities of illness and the choices that they pose; the other asks the individual to view science skeptically or worse, as a social construction that expresses only relations of political and economic power.

Satel has no patience with this latter viewpoint. In fact, she thinks it is a menace. A focus on malign social forces, she is convinced, serves to divert attention and resources from the scientific and inductive approach to disease that has brought about the remarkable progress in clinical medicine and public health in the past century. Moreover, it discourages the personal sense of obligation to oneself and to others that is ultimately the only way that scientific medicine and public health measures can be effective. "[T]he notion that social forces are major determinants of health—that they are so overwhelming in fact that personal responsibility and self-care are reduced to quaint notions and middle-class values—is one of the most pernicious themes in PC medicine."

Basing this argument on her own clinical experience and an imposing knowledge of the pertinent literature, Satel throws herself fearlessly into one after another of the major battles that are being waged by the advocates of PC medicine. She devotes a chapter to countering the arguments of those who see the primary cause of addiction to be an oppressive society, and who seek a cure in "empowering" its victims to reject treatment even when they are pregnant mothers endangering their unborn children. In a typical sally (pun intended), Satel describes the uproar that occurred when the physicians and nurses at the Medical University of South Carolina attempted to combat the crack cocaine epidemic that hit Charleston in the late 1980s. Deeply concerned about the drug's crippling effect on fetal development and infant health, they joined forces with the city's black police

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chief and the county's white prosecutor to initiate a carefully thought out policy of coercing mothers in the university's prenatal clinic into treatment by threatening them with arrest if they did not conform. For their efforts, the school's medical authorities and the public officials working with them were called Nazis, and attacked by the ACLU, feminists, civil rights organizations, and the Department of Health and Human Services for depriving the clinic patients of their civil rights.

But it is well-known that outside coercion is the only way to keep many of these young women in treatment. As Satel writes, "data consistently show that treatment, *when completed*, is quite effective in achieving abstinence. Those who enter a program voluntarily rarely complete it.... 80 to 90 percent have left by the end of the first year. Among such dropouts, relapse within a year is the rule," according to a study published in 1997 in the journal *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*. Women legally mandated to treatment by a judge have been shown to stay in treatment an average of four times longer than those who entered voluntarily.

The accusations of discrimination against a group of women almost all of whom were black, poorly educated, and living below the poverty line were called ludicrous by the police chief when Satel visited him in Charleston. He also had little patience with the notion that these mothers were being punished not only for their pregnancies but also for a lifestyle over which they had no control because it was imposed by a harsh and oppressive society. "Punishment? Discrimination?" he said. "I'd consider it discriminatory if [the medical staff] *didn't* go out of their way to save these black babies." Yet the chief's vigorous support of the policy could not prevent the program from closing down, nor was it able to stop the death threats against the obstetrical nurse who was most instrumental in organizing it.

III.

SATEL APPLIES HER debunking methodology in the same way to other areas in which she believes that the indoctrinologists have convinced too many of the rest of us to take leave of our senses. In chapters called "Nursing Grudges" and "Sisterhood and Medicine," she takes on some of the more questionable consequences of feminist philosophies on the healing of the sick. Those familiar with current nursing literature, or who have worked in the environs of an academic nursing school, are familiar with the resentment that is constantly expressed by the profession's leaders about the hierarchy of power and income with which they must contend. Gender and racial politics have found their way into the curricula of many of these schools, and courses have been introduced that attempt to reach a level of intellectual pseudo-sophistication that is virtually postmodern in its content.

In fact, "postmodern" is precisely the word that some educators proudly use about the context of their aims. Terms such as "eco-feminist," "hermeneutics," "counter-hegemonic methodologies," "Eurocentric," "paternalistic," and "relativity of space-time" have found their way into the literature of nursing. This kind of blather is not restricted to fringe groups in the profession, or to the writings of Modern Language Association wannabes with R.N. degrees. It appears in respected professional journals, under the names of respected professionals. As an example, Satel quotes the summarizing statement of an article in 1995 in *Nursing Science Quarterly* called "Postmodernism and Knowledge Development in Nursing." Its author is Jean Watson, a professor at the University of Colorado School of Nursing and the former president of the National League of Nursing, one of the profession's two leading organizations. Here is Watson's conclusion:

> In summary, as nursing locates itself within the postmodern condition of complexity, with its shadow and light side, and as nursing seeks a dwelling place which is open-ended, ambiguous, dynamically constructed, incessantly questioned, endlessly self-revising, never set, but floating and moving with the river of life, will nurses be part of helping nursing to mature and grow up both ontologically and epistemologically, within its own transformative praxis paradigm?

Nurses have long campaigned for autonomy and demanded a larger role in decision-making and in the actual treatment of patients. They have lamented their perceived status as second-class citizens, blaming most of the problems on the fact that the great majority of them are women in a profession dominated by repressive male attitudes. They have railed about physicians' alleged monopoly over clinical knowledge and practice, and articles in their journals have advocated the espousal of alternative medicine and other methods of treatment in which nurses are the equal of scientifically trained doctors. Among the offerings is the technique of so-called "therapeutic touch," which, as Satel points out, may be among the most crackpot of all the New Age remedies to have been loosed on our open-minded era. Not only is the theory of TT, as it is called, based on no scientific evidence, but it was exposed as a hoax in a widely discussed article in 1998 in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. And yet many nurses have embraced it as a vehicle by which to assert their independence and control.

Listings of continuing education courses offered by academic schools of nursing are apt nowadays to include titles such as the following, all available at the University of Texas School of Nursing: "Using Energy to Enhance Nursing Practice: Use of Color, Music, Touch and Movement"; "Holistic Nursing: Strategies that Transform and Heal"; "Aromatherapy for Nursing Practice"; "Reflexology: Stimulating Healing in the Body"; "Spirituality in Nursing"; "Using the Power of Our Thought for Healing." Most of us, patients and doctors alike, would prefer that our postgraduate nurses be studying basic electrocardiography, fluid and electrolyte balance, the physiology of diabetes, and the management of end-of-life care.

AT A TIME when in-hospital therapies are becoming ever more scientifically complex and patients are becoming much sicker, biological knowledge and the technology and psychology of bedside care are being shortchanged in the curriculum. Hospital nursing is less able to meet the considerable challenges of skilled attention to the changing patterns of disease. Education is hurting, and some of the most rewarding aspects of nursing are treated as though they are of less consequence than the fuzzy dialectics of trendy methodologies. No wonder nursing schools across the nation report declines in enrollment, and no wonder one reads constantly of shortages in recruitment to hospital staffs. To be sure, there are many reasons that fewer people are enrolling in nursing schools, the most significant of which is the marked increase in opportunities for women in other professions, which has not been offset by the still-small enrollment of men; but no one should gainsay the effect of the new policies on the study of the human body and the nurturing of the human being, which yesteryear attracted so many dedicated and intelligent young people.

Satel brings these serious problems into the clear light of day. She is fiercely critical of the lowered academic standards that some schools have permitted in their attempts to increase enrollment. She does not shrink from asserting that the problem is exacerbated by a lack of selectivity based on affirmative action policies and the pursuit of diversity. California's experience may be more extreme than most,

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but to varying degrees it exemplifies the situation in all fifty states:

> In California especially, the nursing shortage and affirmative action in nursing school admission have combined to worrisome effect. Beginning in 1995, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, state nursing programs offered by community colleges have been mandated to adopt either "discrimination-proof" admission systems based on lotteries or first-come first-served lists made up of students with at least a C average in prerequisite courses. Students with higher grades are turned away in order to ensure diversity.
>
> The lack of selectivity has had alarming consequences. Some students are being held back because their accents are too heavy and can't be understood by patients. Several of the college instructors interviewed by the *Los Angeles Times* said that their students were stumped by the kind of single-variable algebra problem used to calculate drug dosages. "They can't read at a high school level ... or they have undiagnosed learning disabilities," said Sue Albert, interim dean of Antelope Valley College.

Dropout rates have soared in California; scores on statewide examinations have dropped; and the number of students needing extra time to finish the coursework has increased. Satel sums up the results of the turbulence in nursing education and nursing theory in a single sentence with which it would be difficult to disagree: "Dumbing down the curriculum, teaching pseudo-science and promoting feel-good, unproven remedies are deeply worrisome trends." And then she adds, also very properly, that "nursing schools, nursing journals, the American Nurses Association and the National League of Nursing should be taking the lead in applying critical judgement and scientific rigor and in rooting out the indoctrinologists among them."

ONE AFTER ANOTHER, Satel takes on the central planks in the platform of PC medicine and replies to them with a devastating barrage of documentation, leavened by her own clinical and personal observations. She is unforgiving in her attack on patients' rights advocates—many of them former patients—who deny the reality of mental illness and spread the so-called "consumer-survivor" message, among whose assertions is that schizophrenia and other serious conditions are not in themselves pathologies and may actually be caused by psychiatric treatment. Supported by civil liberties lawyers, many of those afflicted with disabling illnesses have eluded treatment. There have been more than a few tragedies as a result.

National and local conferences are held at which consumer-survivors and their supporters can learn how to organize themselves into politically successful advocacy groups for such purposes as opposing involuntary treatment legislation or discouraging patients from cooperating with the conventional mental heath system. In 1995, at a meeting of an annual consumer-survivor conference called "Alternatives," funded by the U.S. government's Center for Mental Health Services, the receptive audience heard a psychologist make the irresponsible statement that "schizophrenia has never been proven to be an illness or disease. What is called schizophrenia in young people appears to be a healthy transformational process that should be facilitated instead of treated." His listeners came prepared for what they would hear, by the conference program's description of the talk as a discussion of "how schizophrenia is a healthy, valid, desirable condition, not a disorder." Fancy that: not even a disorder!

IV.

SOMETIMES SATEL'S ENTHUSIASM for her subject gets the better of her, and she forgets—or prefers not to remember—that certain of the issues with which she deals would better be painted in shades of gray. In a chapter bound to raise some hackles, called "Race and Medicine," she attempts to respond to charges that medical care is affected by the color of a patient's skin; and here she is less persuasive than elsewhere. Her statistics, and her descriptions of biological differences in disease patterns, read like feeble protests in the face of the experience of anyone who has ever trained in the teaching divisions of a large hospital, by which I mean the great majority of American physicians.

For conscious and unconscious prejudice pervades rounds, teaching conferences, and even decision-making. Though it is nowadays unspoken and not overt, it still continues to affect the manner in which small decisions and occasionally large ones are made—and it does so in ways that cannot be discovered by statistics, or revealed by questions asked of young people and their teachers, who are often unaware of the subtleties in their own unintended behavior. Even a bit of patronizing does not escape an inner-city black man who may already be wondering whether the doctors are as interested in his welfare as in that of the white computer-programmer in the next bed.

Are the reasons for these disadvantages racial or economic or both? The argument about the causes will never end, but the fact remains that most of the black patients encountered by residents in training are poor, and they cannot help but perceive that they are treated differently by their mainly white middle-class doctors, even should the perception be inaccurate. All the goodwill in the world has not yet managed to change this blight. Satel's assertions to the contrary, accusations of racial bias at the bedside are hardly the result of the need to be politically correct. They arise from the simple observation of everyday events, and their truth can sometimes be brought to the surface by serious endeavors in self-awareness. The attempted refutation of such charges does not belong in Satel's book, and she dilutes the value of her legitimate and important arguments by including it.

AMONG THOSE LEGITIMATE and important arguments are the ones that I wish had been available to me when I was making my failed attempts to convince my colleagues not to fund the women's health initiative. Satel confronts one issue at a time, and deals with each of them by presenting an array of studies and data that turns the thesis of discrimination against women in health care on its head. It is an impressive performance, though here too, she goes just a bit too far in her determination to knock down the entire edifice so faultily constructed by the PC-niks and their acolytes.

Against the charge of under-representation in clinical trials, Satel points to major diseases such as depression, osteoporosis, and arthritis that the Food and Drug Administration has found to have been more carefully studied in women during the course of such evaluations than in men, for the simple reason that they are more common in females. Satel examined information available through the National Institutes of Health, the federal government's most important funding agency, and found that at least since 1979, the earliest year for which she could obtain data, women patients have supplied a large part of the research pool. Moreover, she writes, "the Office on Research on Women's Health at NIH, created in 1990 to respond to just these concerns, found that in 1994 research subjects for ongoing NIH clinical trials were 57 percent women, 36 percent men, and 6 percent unknown. The composition of subjects in trials funded in 1997 was 69 percent women and 31 percent men."

Like depression, osteoporosis, and arthritis, other diseases too occur more commonly in one sex than the other, and such figures are usually reflected in

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the mix of patients studied. But none of this easily available data seems to have affected the rhetoric of those with an extra-medical agenda. As recently as April 2000, the *Harvard Women's Health Watch* sent out a promotional newsletter claiming that "nearly all drug testing has been done on men." To this assertion, Satel replies with a single word: "Wrong." And "wrong" is right.

TO ANSWER THE very serious accusation that women are the victims of uncaring or inferior kinds of treatment, Satel attacks the stalking-horse most commonly trundled out to support such an assertion, namely the tired accusation about radical mastectomy having been a brutal and disfiguring operation, made all the more offensive by the fact that it was often unnecessary. Although there is no doubt that certain surgeons clung to the procedure long after it had been definitively demonstrated (only some thirty years ago, by the way) that lesser techniques were just as effective in treating most cases of breast cancer, the fact is that the introduction of radical mastectomy around 1900 was the first innovation that actually saved lives; and it was such an astounding success that several generations passed before surgeons were willing to consider that less drastic ways of treatment might be of value. It is pertinent here that those less drastic treatments had previously been an abysmal failure that cost the lives of almost all the women on whom they were tried. This changed only when early diagnosis began to occur in the last quarter of the twentieth century, and the value of improved forms of radiotherapy became evident.

As for men's diseases being supported more generously than women's, here too Satel digs right into the most commonly used example, which is the supposedly underfunded area of breast cancer: "Breast cancer research has received more money than any other type of cancer research each year since 1985, when the National Cancer Institute began keeping track of cancer-specific funding. It has always received many times the funding of prostate cancer—about five times the amount in 1997 and triple the expenditure in 1999." Nor do numbers support the allegation that federal and other agencies discriminate against women in allocating funds to researchers. Between 1992 and 1998, the data indicate that men and women researchers enjoyed comparable success in the results of their grant applications. In fact, the NIH figures for 1993, the year in which the most complete information is available, are that grants were awarded to 18.3 percent of female applicants and 17.1 percent of males.

BUT SATEL'S ARGUMENTS are much weaker in the area of career development. Here she seems as unaccountably tone-deaf to the medical world around her as she shows herself to be in the matter of racial bias in the bedside care of patients. It is impossible to work in an academic medical center without hearing at least a few verifiable stories of highly qualified women having been denied promotion, tenure, or some other form of deserved recognition. Even more striking are the anecdotes about misogyny and harassment by male colleagues and superiors, especially on surgical services. Although it is undeniable that some of these complaints arise from the same causes that we have always observed in the case of men, namely the subject's personality difficulties or an attempt to deflect blame for lack of accomplishment, other reports of discrimination are based on reality. Any genuinely objective observer will confirm it. Even more damaging than the comments and the events that occur with a woman's knowledge are the ones about which she never hears.

If Satel has been a victim of an episode or two of bias in career advancement, one would never know it from her vigorous defense of this portion of her argument. So determined is she to disprove the existence of any form of discrimination against women physicians and women patients that she allows her intellectual standards to suffer, and her responses to this particular charge are far less convincing than the powerful facts that she marshals to bring down the others. Satel is utterly persuasive about clinical trials, quality of care, research, and the allocation of funding, and utterly unpersuasive on the question of the glass ceiling and its varieties.

Some of the charges made by the advocates of PC medicine are not only politically correct, they are also correct. Race and class do affect medical care; and sexism does affect the career advancement of women. The perceptive investigator and the clear-minded critical thinker—and for most of her book Satel is precisely such a figure—cannot help but know these things. Her attempt to deny them, or to produce an array of unconvincing statistics to support an unsupportable disquisition, does her no credit. Worse yet, they make a reader suspect that she, too, has yielded to a political agenda, as pernicious in its own way as the one that she attacks with such diligence and courage. There are a few unexamined prejudices in her own writing that need to be overcome.

V.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF Satel's book, and more generally of her approach to notions of social justice, extend further than might be immediately apparent, and she seems to realize this, although she never gives these implications their full due. Her book is not only a straightforward assault on disturbing and dangerous trends that have entered the arena of medical care in the recently politicized atmosphere of our own time. It is also an intervention in an older and larger debate within the medical profession, which involves the field of public health.

For the PC medicine so vigorously opposed by Satel is not as new or as radical or as "postmodern" as she has portrayed it. She is attacking an extreme and sometimes hysterical manifestation of a philosophy that was first promulgated far more rationally in the writings of the great German physician and social reformer Rudolf Virchow during the latter half of the nineteenth century. And the scientific medicine so vigorously defended by Satel is not as narrowly focused as she has portrayed it. She is defending an extreme and sometimes overly reductionist manifestation of a philosophy that was first promulgated in the writings attributed to the Greek physician and medical reformer Hippocrates, several centuries before the Common Era.

The two contributions for which Rudolf Virchow occupies a leading place in the pantheon of medical history would seem to epitomize the opposite ends of the debate between social reform and science, and yet they bring them together. Virchow was the father, in 1858, of the concept of cellular pathology, the notion that the cell is the basic unit of disease. Only by studying the cell itself, he taught, can sickness and its cures be understood. This thesis revolutionized medical theory and eventually medical care, laying the groundwork for the great advances that would take place in the twentieth century, including those made possible by the study of molecular biology. And yet Virchow was at the same time his era's leading exponent of the thesis that a man is the product of his life situation. Environmental influences, occupation, social class: all of these played as strong a role in Virchow's image of the sick patient as did the pathological changes he scrutinized while peering down the barrel of his microscope.

The best medicine is practiced, Virchow asserted, when the scientific concepts and the social concepts find their appropriate places in prevention and cure. "Medicine is a social science," he wrote, "and as the

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science of man, has a duty to perform in recognizing these problems as its own and in offering the means by which a solution may be reached." Even more famously, "Physicians are the natural attorneys of the poor." And Virchow was not the first voice to be heard speaking this way, although he was the first doctor. A century earlier the French philosopher Pierre Cabanis had written, rather like the social activists of today, that "sickness is dependent on the blunders of society." It was Virchow's own clinical experience as a young doctor that provoked him to examine that thesis so carefully that he came to understand its truth, and also its limitations.

VIRCHOW WAS DETERMINED not only that his voice would be heard, but also that action would be taken. He entered politics, and he later recalled his reason this way: "The improvement of medicine would eventually prolong human life, but improvement of social conditions could achieve this result more rapidly and more successfully." He became one of the founders of the radical German Progressive Party, and for forty-two years he was a member of the Berlin City Council, even being elected in 1862 to the Prussian House of Deputies and later the Reichstag. His opposition to the majority party was so stinging that Bismarck challenged him to a duel, which was never fought because the acid-tongued physician ridiculed both his challenger and the impending combat in a public letter. Virchow's engagement in politics did not impede his laboratory work. He continued to make landmark contributions to the science of medicine, but his political focus was on the social inequities that he felt contributed so much to disease. He is a hero to biomedical researchers, clinical physicians, public health officials, and social theorists.

But Virchow was always the quintessential scientist, expert in the evaluation of evidence and unimpressed by the fads or the follies by which less rigorous thinkers are led astray. He was known for his ability to burst the bubble of generally accepted dogma, to puncture it with data and detached observations. It was he who destroyed the myth of the German "race" and its descent from putative Teutonic ancestors, which he accomplished by means of detailed studies of unearthed skulls, and by careful measurements, and by other meticulous observations made on some 6.5 million schoolchildren. The Nazis would revile his memory for it, but they could not escape the accuracy of his conclusions.

Nothing pleased the professor more than giving the lie to popular misconceptions that seemed to have a basis in the authoritative sources of received wisdom. He would have had a field day with our indoctrinologists, even as they claim him as their precursor. He would remind them that social justice may prevent disease by changing the conditions in which it occurs, but it is no replacement for scientific thinking, scientific education, or scientific treatment. And he would no doubt remind Sally Satel that bias and discrimination will always be with us. While it is our obligation to refute those who dwell on social inequality for their own political purposes, it is also our obligation to admit to its existence wherever it is found.

In promoting his theories about the social causes of disease, Virchow was departing from the ancient Hippocratic teaching that the physician must focus his full attention on his patient only. In this view, the healer's sole obligation is to the clinical problem before him, and he must treat it in each individual who comes for care. The cure of social ills is not in his province. When a Hippocratic physician suggested a change in environment, it was meant to affect the individual and not the society.

Many of our best physicians still feel this way, believing that they can have their greatest influence on disease by focusing on a particular problem presented by a particular patient that they are treating at a particular time. Satel appears to be among them. She puts no faith in the notion that social change is the responsibility of the medical system. And this book is her manifesto of the abuses that can occur in the hands of those who feel otherwise.

Satel says many important things in her book, and most of her targets are objectionable in precisely the ways she objects to them. But there is something disquieting about the presence of her own politics and their absoluteness. She seems dogmatically oblivious to the reality of the relationship that links "uneven access to medical services, disparate knowledge of good health practices and personal attitudes" to the long-standing effects of discrimination and bias. Yet medicine has as little business being politically incorrect as being politically correct. Its business is only science and sympathy, clinical art and clinical heart, which is work enough. ■

The Bench of Anxiety

By G. EDWARD WHITE

Law Without Values: The Life, Work, and Legacy of Justice Holmes by Albert W. Alschuler

(University of Chicago Press, 325 pp., $30)

I.

ONE OF THE aspirations of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., who died in 1935 after having been a judge for fifty years, was to "gain the secret isolated joy of the thinker, who knows that, a hundred years after he is dead and forgotten, men who have never heard of him will be moving to the measure of his thought." Whatever one thinks of Holmes, he bids fair to achieve that aspiration. He has been dead for over sixty-five years, and scholarly interest in him shows no signs of abating. But Albert Alschuler's attractive new book suggests that the long and winding path of Holmes's reputation may be taking another turn, in which those who look closely at Holmes's life and ideas find themselves moving away from, rather than toward, the measure of his thought.

Alschuler's book is attractive in several respects. He has read a great deal of Holmes's work, which consists of not only fifty years of assorted judicial opinions, his often impenetrable jurisprudential treatise *The Common Law* (1881), and a large number of speeches and scholarly essays, but also a staggering collection of letters, written from the 1860s to around 1933, when, at ninety-two, Holmes found himself unable to grip a pen. Alschuler has also read most of the important secondary work about Holmes, and he cites that

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literature fairly when he relies upon it and quarrels interestingly with it when he departs from its conclusions. In short, Alschuler comes across as a thorough, fair-minded scholar.

He also comes across as a likable person. By constantly recoiling from the bleaker dimensions of Holmes's thought, Alschuler identifies himself with a more sanguine view of humankind, especially in the capacity of humans to embrace moral values that are real and enduring. He also seems largely free from the high seriousness and pomposity that have regularly plagued commentators on Holmes. The result is that the book's text, and especially its endnotes (which Alschuler says his publisher found excessive), are filled with witticisms, some of which Alschuler directs at himself. It is refreshing to find Alschuler regularly implying that when he encounters one of Holmes's celebrated aphorisms, such as whether a human has any more cosmic significance than a baboon or a grain of sand, his first instinct is to laugh out loud.

IF ALSCHULER'S TOUCH is light, his portrait of Holmes is bleak. In fact, his book is a full-scale indictment of Holmes as a thinker, a judge, and a person. It is also an effort to portray Holmes as a symbol of an influential twentieth-century epistemology—which Alschuler calls moral relativism—that has, in Alschuler's view, a corrosive and paralyzing logic, resulting in countless contemporary Americans being "indolent, cynical, and bitter." "The vices of atomism, alienation, ambivalence, self-centeredness, and vacuity of commitment," Alschuler claims, "appear characteristic of our culture." That is a lot to lay on Holmes, and Alschuler steps back from making Holmes's ideas the explicit source of the entirety of this malaise. But Alschuler is certainly out to strip Holmes of two labels. One is that of a great American hero; the other is that of a truly conflicted intellectual and emotional personality, what Alschuler calls Jekyll-Holmes and Hyde-Holmes. Alschuler's Holmes is a comparatively simple, powerful, and ultimately rotten figure.

His case against Holmes is skillfully made. He begins by arguing that many admirers of Holmes have been seduced by some of his glamorous personal qualities (his longevity, his physical attractiveness, his famous antecedents) and the romantic elements of his career (he was a veteran of the Civil War, the oldest judge to serve on the Supreme Court, and the acquaintance of both John Quincy Adams and Alger Hiss). Those admirers, Alschuler believes, have ignored a consistent response to Holmes by those who knew him well: the more people came to know him, the less they liked him.

Alschuler cites an impressive list of such persons. There are William and Henry James, Holmes's youthful intimates, who found in him a cold, self-absorbed streak; he reminded William James of "a powerful battery, formed like a planing machine to gouge a deep self-beneficial groove through life." There is James Bradley Thayer, who recruited Holmes to help him work on an edition of James Kent's *Commentaries*, only to have Holmes (who had done virtually all the editorial work) insist on being recognized as the sole editor. Thayer recruited Holmes again for the faculty of Harvard Law School, raising money for a chaired professorship when it appeared that the appointment might fall through—and nine months later Holmes left Harvard to accept an appointment on the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts without telling Thayer or any of his Harvard colleagues. "My experience in editing Kent, which I had been willing to forget," Thayer wrote in his diary at the time, "comes back all again and assures me that this conduct is characteristic—that he is ... wanting sadly in the noblest region of human character—selfish, vain, thoughtless of others."

And there are Holmes's biographers. Alschuler suggests, accurately, that Holmes's first authorized biographer, Mark DeWolfe Howe, regarded his commission as a burden, being troubled by some of the human qualities of his subject; and that his second biographer, Grant Gilmore, became so estranged from Holmes after immersing himself in Holmes's papers that when he produced a brief sketch of Holmes as an introduction to a catalog exhibition of some of Holmes's papers in 1975, his assessment was so critical that it was replaced by another essay written by Paul Freund, Holmes's literary executor. Gilmore once described Holmes as "savage, harsh, and cruel, a bitter and lifelong pessimist."

HAVING PORTRAYED HOLMES as strikingly self-preoccupied and ambitious, Alschuler then goes on to suggest that the flip-side of Holmes's passion for recognition was a churlish disinclination to give credit to others whose ideas he had borrowed or found helpful. He reviews *The Common Law*, a book considered such a "classic" that it has never been out of print since its original publication in 1881, to develop a list of scholars from whom Holmes appropriated ideas but whose contributions he declined to acknowledge.

The list includes Rudolf von Jhering (from whom Holmes borrowed his celebrated characterization of "the life of the law" as not "logic" but "experience"); Karl von Savigny and Henry Maine (from whom Holmes derived his theory that legal rules, although constantly changing to reflect their social context, are articulated in terms that stress a formal continuity with the past); Chief Justice Tyndal of the English Court of Common Pleas, who in 1837 defined the standard of liability for negligent actors in tort cases as objective rather than subjective (a major theme of Holmes's torts chapters in *The Common Law*, which did not mention the case); and even the man Holmes described as representing the "powers of darkness," his Harvard colleague Christopher Columbus Langdell (who anticipated another major theme of *The Common Law*, the "bargained-for" theory of consideration in contract law).

Alschuler claims that the only one of the truly original ideas introduced by Holmes in *The Common Law* was the idea, as Holmes put it, that law "constantly transmut[ed] ... novel standards into external or objective ones." *The Common Law* was organized around this idea: by analyzing contracts, criminal law, torts, and possession, Holmes produced, in Alschuler's words, "a narrative ... of movement from subjective to objective standards of liability." The idea was elegantly presented, Alschuler concedes, but it was historically wrongheaded and jurisprudentially incoherent. Holmes never adequately demonstrated the presence of subjective standards of liability in ancient law, nor did he consistently establish the presence, or the efficacy, of fully objective standards in nineteenth-century American common-law fields.

ALSCHULER THEN ARGUES that most of Holmes's ideas about public law subjects, which he communicated primarily in his Supreme Court opinions, were also not so impressive. He observes that several of those ideas, such as Holmes's broad reading of the sovereign immunity of states and municipalities, or his insistence that a state had jurisdiction over a person or a corporation only when that entity was physically present in the state, or his idea that a greater governmental power (such as that of hiring or firing state police officials) subsumes a lesser power (such as that of conditioning employment on not expressing certain political views), were abandoned or qualified by the Supreme Court in Holmes's lifetime. Other ideas of Holmes have continued to be perceived as attractive, in Alschuler's account, but only because Holmes's admirers have misunderstood the basis for his position. These include Holmes's views on the constitutional rights of criminal defendants,

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the appropriate sources of law in diversity cases, the rights of employers and employees in labor disputes, and the rights of persons to engage in free speech.

Alschuler believes that the original basis of Holmes's "liberal" free speech and labor decisions was Darwinist. His most famous early free speech opinion, his dissent in *Abrams v. United States*, did not, in Alschuler's view, "indicate limits to Holmes's veneration of struggle." In that opinion, Holmes advanced the theory that the First and Fourteenth Amendments were designed to foster a "marketplace of ideas" by preventing government from suppressing controversial speech. "[T]he ultimate good desired," he wrote, "is better reached by free trade in ideas ... the best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market." This theory rested on the assumption that in "the marketplace" foolish ideas, on being exposed to the public generally, would be rejected. Holmes remarked, in one of his letters, that radical ideas were like bubbles of champagne: the quickest way to rob them of them effervescence was to expose them to the air.

Similarly, Holmes did not support collective bargaining because he was sympathetic to the plight of industrial workers. He simply thought that economic relationships were Darwinist in character, and that if capital had the weapons of resources and power, labor should be allowed to develop its own weapons in the struggle. As he put it in two dissenting opinions in Massachusetts cases outlawing economic boycotts arising out of labor disputes, life was "made up" of "eternal conflicts between the effort of every man to get the most he can for his services" and "that of... capital... to get his services for the least possible return." Since "combination on one side" was "patent and powerful," combination on the other was the necessary and desirable counterpart, if the battle is to be carried on in a fair and equal way." Strikes, boycotts, and collective bargaining were thus "lawful instrument[s] in the universal struggle of life."

There were only two classes of opinions, Alschuler concludes, where Holmes could be said to have departed from his unreconstructed Darwinist view of the world. Late in Holmes's career he seemed to be attracted to other rationales for protecting speech, such as the idea that the First Amendment protects "freedom for the thought we hate," and to stringent constitutional standards preventing government misconduct in criminal cases, such as increased use of federal habeas corpus remedies, or new trials for criminals where the government had illegally seized evidence or wiretapped confidential conversations. Alschuler concedes that neither class of opinion can easily be squared with Holmes, the apostle of brute force and unlimited sovereign power; but he concludes that the opinions, which came in the last years of Holmes's tenure, were principally the result of Louis Brandeis's influence on Holmes.

WHAT WE ARE left with, after Alschuler's survey of Holmes's life and work, is a portrait of a quite unattractive and undistinguished person and intellect. Given those conclusions, one might wonder what lies behind the ever-growing industry of Holmesian scholarship. Alschuler offers an explanation for that phenomenon. He believes that the source of Holmes's continued interest lies in the continued attractiveness of a philosophical stance that fused all of Holmes's personal and intellectual tendencies and became far too dominant in twentieth-century America. Holmes, in Alschuler's view, took his epistemology, whose conventional philosophical label is moral relativism, to its logical conclusions. At one point Alschuler characterizes Holmes's version of moral relativism as "noble nihilism," a commitment to the passionate pursuit of ideals that have no intelligible basis other than the pursuer's own ungrounded belief.

Holmes, according to Alschuler, believed in acting not because human activity conveyed any value on others or on the world at large, but because it constituted an expression of the self in a universe that is utterly indifferent to the existence of its human inhabitants. The finest expressions of such activity, Holmes believed, were the "glories" of war and other struggles for existence, because they brought humans closer to mortal combat, the ultimate expression of human personality. At this point Alschuler's Holmes begins to resemble one of the decadent early-twentieth-century characters in the novels of E. Phillips Oppenheim, a writer whom Holmes liked to read when tired of Malthus and Dewey and the heavier literature. Life is a meaningless game, Oppenheim's characters believe, so why not engage in dueling or espionage or sexual encounters? At least one is putting one's powers to work, and expressing oneself; and the alternative is boredom.

Alschuler's Holmes is presented as a "dead" figure, in the sense that he cannot serve as a source of inspiration for those who came after him, or for us. In Alschuler's portrait, Holmes appears as a man who has reached a state of such cynicism in his own life and thought that he feels his only mission is to play out the meaningless struggle of life by staying alive and functioning one more day. For this avatar of a "life without values," the aim of living was to survive, and that was all.

II.

THERE IS ANOTHER way to look at Holmes's distinctive combination of metaphysical gloom and *joie de vivre*. One could start by thinking of Holmes's long and rich life as an exercise in the construction of roles that he hoped would enable him to channel his talents into pursuits at which he excelled, and at the same time ease his self-doubts. Throughout his life Holmes appears to have been haunted by a series of anxieties, none of which were completely banished by the roles that he fashioned. One anxiety was that he would be incapable of emerging from the shadow of his famous father, whose gifts and talents strikingly resembled his own. Another anxiety was that he would be seen as someone not fully "masculine" by late-nineteenth-century standards: a less than solid, less than fully courageous figure; an egregiously otherworldly man. And another anxiety was that his contributions to American law, as a scholar and as a judge, would not be given the recognition that they deserved.

The earliest of the roles through which Holmes sought personal and professional completeness was that of the former soldier. Holmes had enlisted in the Civil War at the age of twenty because, as he wrote to a friend, he thought it the great chivalric crusade of his generation, and because fighting in the war was something his father, whose "natural bent for literature" he had inherited, could not do, since he was too old for active service and lukewarm about the Union effort. Holmes quickly discovered that the details of war had very little to do with inter-generational conflict, and had an elusive relationship to the reasons for enlisting. War, for Holmes, was mainly about experiencing and avoiding random death.

Holmes was wounded three times, stricken with dysentery, and terrified. He watched, in one campaign, "nearly every Regimental officer I knew or cared for" being killed or wounded. He eventually waived promotion in his infantry regiment to take a less hazardous aide-de-camp position, and subsequently resigned his commission after his initial enlistment term expired, even though the course of the war remained uncertain at the time. After deciding to resign, he wrote his mother that he could "no longer endure the labors and hardships of the line."

With Holmes's return from the Civil War he began the construction of his image of a veteran, a member of a generation that had been "touched with fire." This was the "Captain Holmes" who

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delighted London society on his visit to England in 1866. He burned many of his Civil War letters and diary entries, leaving a record that included an after-the-fact description of his first wound, in which he portrayed himself as facing death calmly without changing his skepticism about the existence of God. He stowed away the bloody uniforms that he had worn when shot in the chest and the neck, secreting in the pockets the musket balls that the surgeons had dug from his body. He began a series of reminiscences on the war in which his own actions and the actions of his contemporaries in passionately putting their lives on the line for causes they could not expect to understand, let alone expect to triumph, were regarded as a species of heroism.

Holmes understood, beneath this constructed account, that he had not been a gifted soldier, and that he had been lucky to survive, as many of his contemporaries had not. He might deliver an occasional Memorial Day tribute, but he had no future as a professional war hero. "The army taught me," he wrote to Harold Laski, "to know that however fine [a] fellow I thought myself in my usual routine there were other situations ... in which I was inferior to men that I might have looked down on." Still, he tried to transpose some of his sense of wartime heroism into another role for himself: the lonely, driven scholar, passionately pursuing original lines of inquiry in a manner comparable to that of a soldier or an adventurer on a quest. Solitary scholarship was a task that Holmes was better suited to play, and his deep investment in it in his late twenties and thirties helps explain his strident insistence on the originality of his contributions and his unwillingness to give credit to others.

BUT AS HE reached the age of forty, having devoted fifteen years to studying law, writing legal essays, editing a legal journal, and practicing law, he chafed at his comparative obscurity. Then came the invitation, in 1880, to deliver a series of public lectures in Boston, setting off an intense year of activity from which eventually emerged *The Common Law*, which appeared in print just before Holmes's fortieth birthday and led to his appointment to the Harvard Law School faculty. In a later essay, Holmes likened the years in which he immersed himself in scholarship to crossing an ice floe: an ardent, hazardous journey into the unknown. The equation of scholarship with physical danger was ludicrously contrived, of course; but it demonstrated the depth of Holmes's interest in fashioning a role that would assuage his anxieties as well as complement his talents.

The role of scholar did not prove fully capable of meeting those goals. After nine months at Harvard Law School, Holmes grew "sober with an inarticulate sense of limitation." Academic life was "but half life," he wrote to Felix Frankfurter in 1913. It was "a withdrawl from the fight in order to utter smart things ... from a cloister." When a judgeship on the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts was offered, Holmes leapt at it with (as some of his Harvard colleagues thought) embarrassing zeal. Judging, he felt, would be closer to "business in the world," which "hardens the fiber and I think is likely to make more of a man of one...." Immersion in the real world, courage, masculinity, were now equated in his mind with the judicial bench.

One of the startling discoveries that Holmes made on becoming a judge was that the role of an associate justice on a state's highest court did not perfectly complement his talents and his aspirations. To be sure, he was gifted at swiftly "getting to the bottom" of legal questions, and equally gifted at producing opinions rapidly and infusing them with eloquence. But he was not particularly good at laying out all the steps of his reasoning, so that his opinions sometimes appeared cryptic or obscure. Nor was he particularly patient with his fellow judges, few of whose minds worked as fast as his and not all of whom were impressed with a vivid but overstated phrase. Nor did judging on the Massachusetts court present an opportunity for writing into the law of Massachusetts some of the doctrinal theories that he had propounded in *The Common Law*. Too many cases, he said in a speech in 1900, after two decades on the Supreme Judicial Court, had treated "trifling and transitory matters."

Yet Holmes was not about to abandon the job of judge. For all its limitations, his position identified him with the real world, and gave him an opportunity to develop a public reputation doing something that his father could not do. Instead, as the nineteenth century passed into the twentieth and he remained on the Supreme Judicial Court, he assumed a conflicted stance toward his professional role. He described himself as a "jobbist," one who took pleasure in being the elemental force that he was, plowing through his court's docket and making decisions that affected people's lives. At the same time he yearned for greater public recognition. In his growing correspondence, he alternated between describing the almost physical pleasure he felt in rapidly disposing of cases and characterizing the mood in which he worked as one of "bitter loneliness."

In 1902, Holmes received an opportunity to become more than a Massachusetts "jobbist." By a fortuitous combination of circumstances, which included the assassination of William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt was given an opportunity to appoint a Supreme Court justice from the New England area. Roosevelt was a close friend of Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts, who was a close acquaintance of Holmes. Holmes was delighted to receive the appointment, but he chafed at two newspapers calling him a "literary feller" and suggesting that "his striking originality may help, when it does not hinder." "[T]hey bully me with Shaw, Marshall, and the rest," Holmes complained, expressing a concern that after twenty years of judging he was still perceived by some contemporaries as a less than weighty being, and not the equivalent of Lemuel Shaw, a former Chief Justice of his Massachusetts court, and John Marshall, who were regarded at the time as archetypal examples of judicial solidity.

TEN YEARS AFTER joining the Supreme Court, Holmes, being over seventy, was eligible to retire on an annual pension that would be the equivalent of his salary. He thought seriously about retirement, confessing that although the Supreme Court's business far exceeded that of the Supreme Judicial Court in its scope and its importance, he had not yet achieved the recognition that he anticipated. In the year that Holmes became eligible for retirement, Robert Taft was recommended for a clerkship with Holmes by John Chipman Gray of the Harvard Law School. Gray admitted that "Justice Holmes's opinions sometimes lack lucidity," but encouraged Taft to accept the position. Taft turned it down, partly on the advice of his father, ex-President William Howard Taft, who felt that clerking for Holmes would be the equivalent of another year at Harvard law school. The episode suggested that in some circles Holmes was still perceived as an academic with a tendency toward obscurity.

Holmes did not retire in 1912. He did not retire until 1932, at the age of ninety-one, when Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes gently nudged him in that direction. When he retired, another role opened up for him, one in which he took great satisfaction: the role of sage. The audience who helped him fashion that role was a younger generation of reformist intellectuals who found, in some of his constitutional opinions, harbingers of a judicial posture of deference toward legislatures on issues of economic redistribution and an aggressive scrutiny of legislation restricting free speech. Alschuler is correct to point out that Holmes believed that governmental tinkering with the economy was largely futile, and that he was no enthusiast for the contro-

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versial reformist ideas that he believed should be allowed to enter the marketplace. But if Holmes disdained "upward and onward" reformers, he loved their praise, and he courted them in voluminous letters. By his retirement Holmes had seen his reputation shift from that of obscure dilettante to that of Great Judge. He had spent more time in the last twenty years of his judicial career on correspondence than on writing opinions.

THE ROLE OF sage seemed to alleviate each of the anxieties that preoccupied Holmes for most of his life. In his last years the solicitude of younger generations could be seen as bearing witness to the fact that he had become at least as famous as his father, and in a different field. He could take solace that his remarkable physical constitution—other than a prostate operation at 81, he had no serious illnesses until he contracted pneumonia just before his death at 93—was an example of a kind of masculine strength. After his retirement, intimates noted that he had taken on a posture consistent with what he called "the eternal gravitation toward melancholy and doubt," but he remained well fixed, well nourished, and well taken care of until the end.

The roles of jobbist and sage had resulted in Holmes, in his later life, defining himself increasingly through his correspondence. Exchanging thoughts about books and ideas in letters was the jobbist's recreation and the sage's outlet. But letter writing produced a mountain of recorded thoughts, and although Holmes destroyed some of his correspondence, he or his correspondents preserved a great many of his letters. In his correspondence one regularly sees Holmes grappling with his demons. Sometimes the feelings of terror or inadequacy related to the Civil War rise up, and he constructs fatalistic theories of the relationship between ideals and experience, or he muses about the cosmic insignificance of humans. Sometimes his bitterness about being perceived as a lightweight species of judge, or an obscurantist, emerges as a pseudo-posture of Olympian detachment. Sometimes his deep preoccupation with himself shows through, but sometimes a schoolboy idealism emerges, as when he tells Clare Castletown, the Anglo-Irish aristocrat with whom he became infatuated in 1896, that although they profess to be skeptics, at bottom they believe in ideals, including the ideal of abiding with one another. (Castletown was involved in another extramarital liaison when she first became a figure of romance for Holmes, and she never seems to have had these illusions about their relationship.)

Long exposure to Holmes in a variety of settings invites the conclusion that he was a highly sensitive, periodically troubled person who chose to deflect his demons with techniques at which he was supremely gifted—the techniques of fashioning intellectual generalizations and embodying the contradictions of experience in memorable language. If one takes his generalizations and his aphorisms as deep statements of value, as Alschuler does, Holmes can easily appear to be cynical and soulless rather than agitated and evasive. But to do so is to ignore the extent to which Holmes's letter-writing was yet another construction of a role, another effort in his search for a completeness that he never found.

If Alschuler's view of Holmes is persuasive, Holmes's legacy reduces itself to elegant articulations of the indifferent naturalism of the universe, and the anarchic and brutal impulses in humans, and the equation of law with raw power, and the limited capacity of any ideas or values to survive over time. But I cannot share Alschuler's view of Holmes as a systematic thinker who resolved his own conflicts, and those he found in human experience, with a finished picture of the world. In order to advance his view of Holmes as a "noble nihilist," Alschuler needs to suppress, or to treat skeptically, the large vein of romanticism that runs through Holmes's extrajudicial writing, as well as the large number of comments that he made to friends that suggest that he cared deeply about certain ideals—ranging from democratic theory to aristocratic codes of noblesse oblige to falling in love—even though he could not be sure about their universal validity. And what if these ideals were not universal? Surely that does not empty them of meaning, or make Holmes a complete cynic.

The misanthropic and nihilistic musings that Alschuler extracts from Holmes's correspondence are certainly a part of his legacy. But they can best be seen, I think, as attempts to generalize, to transform into abstractions, the frustrations that he felt when one or another of the various roles that he constructed to make life more palatable let him down. Those dark and self-regarding reflections are not all that Holmes has bequeathed to us. He has left also a rich body of legal ideas, an ideal resolution in the service of conquering fear, and an example of a man intelligently taking pleasure from life.

Charles Evans Hughes was not quite right in describing Holmes as having lived "a complete human life." But he was on the mark in seeing Holmes as "blessed by great talent, with a deserved fame never dimmed and always growing." Holmes became, and remains, and deserves to remain, the best-known judge in American history. And his anxiety was a part of his glory. He was never able fully to resolve the contradictions in his thoughts and his feelings, or the contradictions of life; but he offered ways of thinking about, and existing with, those contradictions. That, too, was a variety of heroism. ■

The Battle of Britain

By LAURA BEERS

Burying Caesar: The Churchill–Chamberlain Rivalry by Graham Stewart

(Overlook Press, 448 pp., $40)

I.

ON JULY 25, 1945, the day the British people voted the Conservative majority out of office and ended Winston Churchill's five-year tenure as prime minister, many may have doubted that history would treat the wartime leader as well as it has. Churchill himself saw the election returns as a personal rejection, writing in his memoirs that, henceforth:

> All the pressure of great events, on and against which I had mentally so long maintained my "flying speed," would cease and I should fall. The power to shape the future would be denied me. The knowledge and experience I had gathered, the authority and goodwill I had gained in so many countries, would vanish.... My wife said to me, "It may well be a blessing in disguise." I replied, "At the moment it seems quite well disguised."

Though the future looked bleak for

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Churchill from the standpoint of July 1945, his prompt ouster from power at the end of the war did much to solidify his reputation as an iron-willed hero. Unlike Truman, who had to face the difficult administrative task of shepherding his country back from a wartime economy to a peacetime one, Churchill had the luxury of criticizing the Labour government's inevitable missteps from the lofty distance of the opposition benches. By the time he was reelected to the premiership in 1951, Britain had completed the postwar transition, and the seventy-seven-year-old elder statesman governed over a comparatively stable country.

Meanwhile the first, highly positive Churchill biographies had already begun to role off the presses. *Time* magazine had named him "Man of the Year" for a second time in 1949 (he received the title in 1941), describing the following themes as distinctly Churchillian: "no appeasement of the armed enemy; no revenge on the beaten enemy; no military encroachments on civilian responsibility; look ahead to what you want and remember that every action has consequences which affect the goal." Churchill himself succinctly reprised the Churchillian motto in a twelve-word "Moral of the Work" that prefaced his six-volume history, *The Second World War*, first published in 1953: "In War: Resolution; In Defeat: Defiance; In Victory: Magnanimity; In Peace: Goodwill." The books were immediate best-sellers, and have remained an inestimable source for historians. In 1963, the U.S. Congress made Churchill, whose mother was American, an honorary citizen.

Historians have generally taken their cues in writing about Churchill from such assessments, portraying him as dedicated and strong-willed, a moral leader, and a modern-day hero. It was not until the last decade that the inevitable "revisionism" on the wartime leader began to appear. The resulting critiques were in many ways an outgrowth of the earlier phenomenon of Chamberlain revisionism. As historians began to reexamine Neville Chamberlain's policy of appeasement, many took a more sympathetic view of Churchill's predecessor. In *How War Came*, which appeared in 1989, the British historian Donald Cameron Watt reassessed the eleven months between Munich and the invasion of Poland, and determined that the desire to avoid a repetition of the horrors of World War I was the perfectly valid basis of Chamberlain's appeasement policy. That same year Richard Overy and Andrew Wheatcroft came out with *The Road to War*, which argued that Chamberlain's appeasement policy benefited Britain by buying the country time to rearm and to prepare psychologically for war.

For certain British scholars, the rehabilitation of Chamberlain seemed to lead logically to the de-heroization of Churchill. First came the assessment from scholars such as Watt that Churchill's exhortations for increased action in the 1930s were unrealistic and unnecessarily rabble-rousing; and that Churchill was demanding the impossible when he asked for speedier rearmament, while Chamberlain was preparing the country for war as quickly as was feasible at the time. Such comparatively mild criticisms laid the groundwork for the entrance onto the scene of more virulent revisionists, such as John Charmley and Alan Clark, who contended that Churchill's motto of "In War: Resolution; In Defeat: Defiance" was ill-conceived and contrary to British international interests. Better for Britain, they argued, to have negotiated a peace with the Nazis and preserved its status as an international power than to have submitted to a postwar vassalage to the United States.

NOW THE BRITISH scholar Graham Stewart has produced an analysis that draws heavily on revisionist scholarship without going so far as to repudiate Britain's role in World War II. *Burying Caesar* makes explicit what has hitherto been more of a tacit comparison between Churchill and Chamberlain. The lives and the careers of the two men are juxtaposed throughout Stewart's book, so that the reader witnesses the two protagonists rising in tandem, until the younger man finally eclipses and displaces his predecessor.

Stewart begins his narrative at the turn of the century, relating in brief the history of Churchill and Chamberlain *pères*. This section, I assume, is meant to illustrate that the rivalry between the Chamberlains and the Churchills transcended generations. Joseph Chamberlain is portrayed as a respected elder statesman whereas Randolph Churchill comes off as somewhat of a comic figure who, though beloved by his youngest son, is dismissed by most of his peers in the House of Commons. After this quick and highly biased background, Stewart turns his discussion to the two sons.

Chamberlain is depicted as practical and plodding. Not a brilliant man but a determined administrator, he approached his long tenure as Chancellor of the Exchequer with the same careful determination that he exhibited as Mayor of Birmingham and as Minister of Health during the first Baldwin Government in the 1920s. Chamberlain, who graduated from Birmingham, was the only British prime minister with a degree from an English university other than Oxford or Cambridge, and Stewart suggests that the politician's diligence may have stemmed, in part, from a sense of inferiority. Though he was a scion of the political elite himself, Chamberlain is portrayed by Stewart as always feeling out of place, and possibly resentful of such noble political families as the Churchills. But he worked hard, and during the 1920s and '30s he became as much a political insider as Churchill was then an outsider.

In contrast to Chamberlain, Churchill (who did not graduate from university at all) is decidedly lacking in any sense of his own inferiority. The young minister is portrayed as radical and opportunistic. At an early age, he befriended Lloyd George (whom Stewart obviously dislikes) and found himself in the War Cabinet, first as First Lord of the Admiralty and later as Minister of Munitions. Then, from 1919 to 1921, he headed the War Office, where he "kept himself busy spreading world counter-revolution." He spent the 1920s variously in and out of government, and the 1930s, his "wilderness years," entirely without a Cabinet position. He was on the outside looking in, according to Stewart, and could only stare with undisguised envy at politicians such as Chamberlain.

Churchill's chances to reenter the political scene improved dramatically in 1934, when he joined forces with members of the Conservative majority (including Chamberlain) in support of a larger budget appropriation for rearmament. Thenceforth, the two contenders for political power promoted similar goals—namely, negotiated peace from a position of strength—with varying political success. But whereas Chamberlain championed "moderate" rearmament and appeasement policies intended to please both hawks and doves, Churchill bullheadedly refused to compromise. It was for this reason, says Stewart, that Chamberlain succeeded politically where Churchill routinely failed, and that the older man persistently excluded the younger man from his Cabinet despite the latter's growing popularity.

When the tide of popular opinion shifted dramatically in favor of the hawks after Munich, and it became clear that Chamberlain's appeasement was no longer acceptable to the majority of the House, the prime minister bitterly conceded that he must step down. But Chamberlain's defeat was not meant to be Churchill's success: according to Stewart, everyone, including Churchill, assumed that the new prime minister should have been the foreign minister, Lord Halifax. It was only after Halifax declined the honor that the country turned reluctantly to Churchill. So it was that, in the end, as the result of a lucky turn of events, the less directed, less moderate, less compromising of the rivals rose to power.

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And Stewart adds: "However, Churchill knew that in these circumstances he could only cling to power for as long as Chamberlain, Halifax and the rest of the 'old gang' chose not to use their parliamentary majority to bring him down.... Keeping them on board was the price to be paid in return for their giving him the legitimacy he needed with which to govern." Thus, in the closing pages of his narrative, Stewart interjects an interesting and controversial thesis: without the support of his opponents, Churchill could not have survived. It was to Chamberlain himself, and not to his determined steadfastness in opposing Chamberlain over the previous decade, that Churchill owed his initial success. Or, to take a cue from the book's title, it was to Caesar that Antony owed his throne.

II.

STEWART'S ACCOUNT IS rather hampered by the fact that it often contradicts historical reality. Almost immediately upon opening the book, the reader collides with the first obstacle in writing a history subtitled "The Churchill-Chamberlain Rivalry": namely, that there was no special rivalry between the two families. Up until the latter half of the twentieth century, politics in Britain was, to a high degree, a family affair. The Churchills and the Chamberlains were not the only Westminster dynasties: the Baldwins, the Gladstones, the Laws, the Macmillans, and the Salisburys (among others) all offered up more than one generation of politicians to public service. While the existence of multiple Churchills and Chamberlains serving in parliament from the late-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century may be proof of a multigenerational relationship between the families, proof of a relationship does not translate to proof of a rivalry.

Nor does anything in the history of their relationship hint at competition or discord. As Stewart himself concedes, Joseph Chamberlain was not prominent among Randolph Churchill's numerous detractors, nor did he, as did so many others, take a dim view of Randolph's youngest son. In fact, as Stewart admits:

> Amongst those of his father's generation whom [Winston Churchill] sought out to help him get to know the distant figure he so much revered was Joseph Chamberlain. The time and consideration that 'Old Joe' extended to him left him deeply impressed.... The old statesman showed him the greatest sympathy and charm, sitting up late with him, recalling the fights of yesteryear with a bottle of 1834 port until two in the morning.

Nor was Churchill on notably bad terms with the younger Chamberlains. Neville's half-brother Austen, though he opposed Churchill's views on most issues, worked with him amicably on anti-appeasement policy, particularly in their joint capacity as supporters of the League of Nations Union, an extra-governmental, predominantly upper-class organization that promoted the League's interests within Britain. Winston's relations with Neville were admittedly more distant, but this could be put down in part to their lack of interaction during much of the '30s. As Stewart writes in the epilogue to his work:

> From [1929] until 1938, the two had seen little of each other and had been following their own separate agendas: until 1935, Churchill had been occupied with India, a subject in which Chamberlain had little interest. The years between 1931 and 1937 when Chamberlain presided over the Treasury were those in which Churchill's eye for economic detail was at its least penetrating.

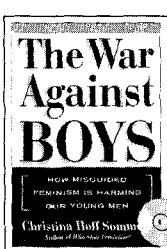
If Churchill perceived anyone as a direct rival during this period, it was either Stanley Baldwin, the leader of the Conservative Party and the prime minister from 1935 to 1938, whom he described as "crafty, patient, and almost amazingly lazy," or Samuel Hoare, the Secretary of State for India, whose proposed plan for limited Indian home rule Churchill was bent on derailing. As for Chamberlain, he was without rival for most of the period. In his position as Chancellor of the Exchequer, which he held for the majority of the 1930s, he was one of the leading voices in MacDonald's coalition government of 1931–1935, and Baldwin's acknowledged second-in-command and political heir from 1935 until his own ascendancy to the premiership three years later. There was no one in any real position to threaten Chamberlain's hold on power during this period—certainly not Churchill, the perennial backbencher.

THE ONE AREA over which the two did clash was foreign policy, with Churchill prophesying a potential war as early as 1934, and Chamberlain unable to concede the possibility of another war until it was virtually upon him. Yet Stewart chooses not to dwell on this fundamental schism, instead insisting that "during this time [1929–1938] their differences on rearmament and even foreign policy were more a matter of degree than of fundamental disagreement." As a result of this peculiar historiographical decision, the real battle of the titans does not begin in Stewart's narrative until 1938, or halfway through the book.

The first half of Stewart's book is taken up instead with an economics-laden discussion of British tariff policy during the Depression and an examination of the often forgotten parliamentary debate over India reform, in which Churchill and his fellow "diehard" Conservatives faced off against the party majority over the issue of extended Indian sovereignty. Stewart has referred to his volume as two books in one, and while the first part is independently interesting, it has little relevance to the author's suggested theme. But rather than concede its essential irrelevance to a story whose rightful subject is "Warmonger vs. Appeaser, 1938–1940," Stewart uses this first section to establish the political ambitions of both leaders before the appeasement battle began in earnest.

It is at this point that the main weakness of Stewart's approach becomes apparent: a historical retelling of the 1930s that presents Churchill as Mark Antony to Chamberlain's Julius Caesar is quite simply incredible. Churchill was so far removed from the circles of power, and so lacking in any legitimate scheme to propel himself off the backbench and into the government, that the historian Robert Rhodes James actually wrote a political biography of him during that period titled *Churchill: A Study in Failure, 1900-1939*. The Member from Epping may have possessed the oratorical genius of a born leader, but he displayed no real prospects of—or ambition toward—becoming one. But Stewart plows ahead with his conceit, downplaying those aspects of Churchill's bullheadedness and dedication of purpose that unexpectedly earned him the premiership in 1940, and playing up his alleged powerlust in an attempt to lend credibility to the idea that Churchill viewed Chamberlain as a serious rival for power in the 1930s, and vice versa.

In Stewart's retelling—which chimes nicely with the language of Churchill's contemporary detractors—Churchill is portrayed as a political troublemaker and gadfly, a career-minded opportunist



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whose causes and backbench alliances were motivated by a desire to propel himself into the inner circles of government. It is true that Churchill was not without political ambitions: he made no secret of how hurt he was by his constant exclusion from Baldwin's successive Cabinets. Yet, whereas Stewart takes the position that Churchill promoted various causes in the hope that they would propel him into a position of power, it would be more accurate to say that he yearned to be in a position of power so as to be able to better promote his causes.

When Churchill told his wife in 1935 that the government was in dire need of a "commanding mind reaching over the whole field of public affairs," it is hardly in doubt that he viewed himself as in possession of just such a mind. His fault was less political ambition than a conviction that he possessed a vision that others lacked, that he saw the right course more clearly than anyone else. Of course, he owes his place in history to the fact that, as concerns the threat of Nazism, he did perceive the right course more clearly than his detractors, particularly Neville Chamberlain. But Stewart could not have written a drama in which Churchill played Antony unless he gave him Antony's jealousy and ambition. He does so by drawing selectively from source material and quoting extensively from the diaries and private papers of Churchill's numerous detractors within the Conservative Party, producing a portrait of Churchill that could have been drawn by Stanley Baldwin.

STEWART'S TALE BEGINS in 1904, when Randolph Churchill's heir abandoned his father's party and crossed the floor to the Liberal benches to protest the Tories' support for reversing Britain's long-held policy of free trade. Stewart notes that "many saw in the precocity of the 29-year-old Churchill the machinations of opportunism that they had long identified with his late father." The author, too, views the young politician's move as motivated not so much by ideological conviction as by political calculation: he describes the new Liberal MP as "having the first, if not the last, laugh over his former colleagues when the Conservatives lost the 1906 general election by a landslide." He goes on to write that, for the next five years, Churchill "bobbed upon the high tide of personal ambition."

To be sure, Stewart allows Churchill the legitimacy of his political conviction when he crossed back over from the Liberal bench to the Tory bench in 1924. After the unexpected showing of the Labour Party in the 1923 election, the Liberals found themselves holding the balance of power and in a position to play kingmaker to either the Tories' Stanley Baldwin or Labour's Ramsey MacDonald. When the Liberals lent their support to Labour and allowed the (relatively) new party to form its first government, Churchill rejoined the Conservatives, "seeing the party as the only bulwark against socialism and, worse, revolution. Furthermore, he hoped that other Liberals would do likewise and align with the Conservatives to fight against the menace of the Labour Movement."

Churchill had established his antipathy to socialism early on when, as Secretary of War, he sent British troops into Russia to fight on the side of the Whites against Lenin and Trotsky. (Ironically, it was Churchill, the vehement anti-socialist, who would lead the push for rapprochement with the Soviet Union in the years leading up to World War II.) Still, the fight over a possible Anglo-Soviet alliance was then a decade away, and the region that preoccupied Churchill's attention during the late 1920s and early '30s was not Europe but India.

In his lengthy treatment of the India Home Rule controversy of the early 1930s, when Churchill led a group of imperialist "diehards"—whom their Tory detractors referred to as "Winston & Co." or "the Winstonians"—in a crusade against any expansion of home rule on the subcontinent, Stewart repeatedly suggests that Churchill's campaign was motivated not by an unyielding and outdated imperialist conviction so much as by a desire to rally a large enough Conservative minority to his cause to pose a threat to Baldwin's leadership of the Conservative Party. In his analysis of the political situation surrounding the India debate, Stewart suggests that "Churchill might have followed Austen Chamberlain's lead and accepted the inevitability of the Indian policy, thereby placing himself in an advantageous position to return to the Cabinet at the head of a pro-rearmament group after 1935."

Setting aside the dubious logic behind this hypothesis (Austen Chamberlain was not offered a seat in the Cabinet after the India debate), Stewart still misses the fundamental reality that Churchill could not have behaved differently concerning India, because to do so would have been distinctly anti-Churchillian. The same mentality that led him to vow, in his memorable wartime broadcast, that

> We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be. We shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.

prevented him from budging an inch in opposing an action which he felt would sound "the knell of the British Empire in the East."

Further evidence that Churchill saw the India controversy as a crusade of principle rather than an opportunity for political promotion can be found in the extent to which he burned his bridges and alienated potential political allies in his battle against Gandhi and the Congress Party. In March 1933, Parliament began a debate on the India White Paper, a government brief advocating the creation of an all-Indian democratic congress, which, though it would lack real substantive powers, would, in the view of Winston & Co., raise Indian political ambitions and result in protests and political unrest in the colony. In the debate over the White Paper, Churchill seemed to go mad with paranoia, and charged, among other things, that the government was predicating promotion in the Indian civil service on support for its proposals. After the speech, Austen Chamberlain, always a bigger admirer of Churchill than was his younger brother, went so far as to say that the eloquent imperialist had "become hysterical" and that "it is impossible to discuss India with him even privately." Say what you will about the merits of Churchill's imperialist convictions, they appear at least to have been perfectly genuine.

III.

IN THE SECOND HALF of his book, Stewart is finally given the opportunity to document the true extent of the rivalry between Churchill and Chamberlain over foreign policy. The surprising thing is that he does just the opposite. Instead of tearing into the profound differences between the two politicians' opinions on rearmament and accommodation with Germany from as early as 1934, he downplays those differences, insisting that the matters at issue between the two were differences of degree, not of substance. This misinterpretation disregards the plain historical fact that Churchill saw the 1930s as a prelude to likely war, whereas Chamberlain viewed it, wrongly, as a decade of accommodation and peace.

Stewart moves from the conclusion of the India debate in the government's favor in June 1935 to a discussion of Churchill's advocacy of rearmament. In so doing, he leaves the reader with a false chronological impression—that rearmament was something that Churchill took up once he no longer had India to use as fodder for his parliamentary speeches. In fact, as Stewart himself notes, Churchill made his first speech on the armaments issue in

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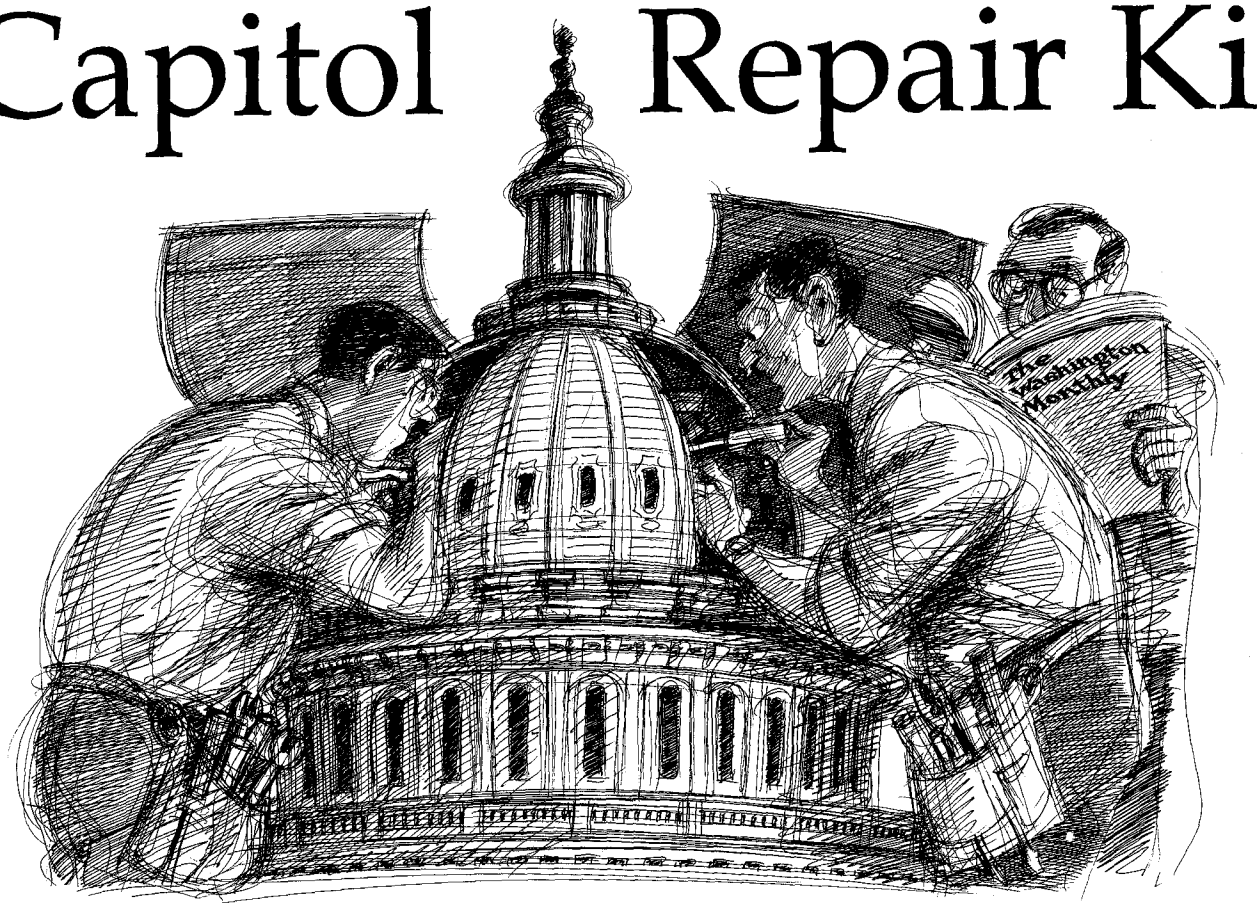

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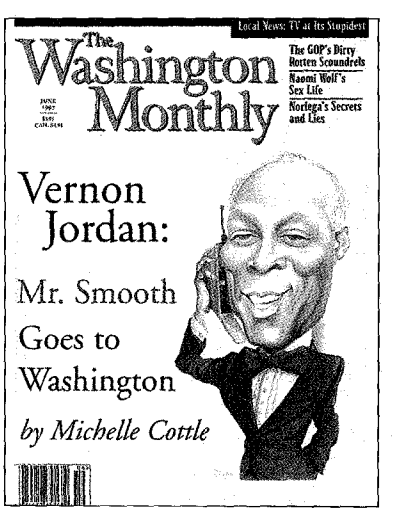
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November 1932, when he cautioned against an improvident disarmament policy resulting from false confidence instilled by the League of Nations disarmament conference. His anxieties about events on the Continent only increased, and by 1934 he was openly speaking of the possibility of a second world war. In a speech to the House of Commons that February, Churchill warned his colleagues of the extent to which the international political environment had changed since he left the government more than four years earlier:

> [In the 1920s] we thought it was right to take it as a rule that there would be no major war within ten years in which we should be engaged. No one could take that principle as a guide today. No cabinet, however pacific and peace-loving, could base their naval and military organization upon such an assumption as that.

One could argue that Chamberlain's advocacy of a fifty-million-pound hike in the military budget in June 1934—for which the Labour Party accused him of "the meanest scaremongering, disgraceful in a man of Mr. Chamberlain's responsible position"—illustrated the similarity of his position with Churchill's own. But the apparent similarity of policy concealed a real difference in motive. In pushing for modest rearmament after 1934, Chamberlain believed that increased military strength would give Britain a stronger position from which to bargain with Italy and Germany in order to stabilize the peace—a sort of small-scale cold war strategy. As late as 1938, before his final conference with Hitler outside Munich, Chamberlain broadcast over the BBC his conviction that Britain would not, could not be swept up in another world war: "How horrible, fantastic, incredible, it is, that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas-masks here because of a quarrel going on in a far away country between people of whom we know nothing!" Churchill, by contrast, favored rearmament for the same reason that, from as early as 1936, he pushed both for the creation of a Ministry of Supply and for a strategic-political alliance with the Soviet Union: he foresaw the likelihood of another international conflagration.

In the summer of 1936, Churchill began his lengthy campaign to create a Ministry of Supply responsible for "securing the execution of the existing [production] programmes, and planning British industry to spring quickly into war-time conditions, and creating a high control effective for this and the present purpose." Whereas his advocacy of rearmament could be interpreted simply as evidence of his desire to increase Britain's bargaining clout within the League of Nations and with the totalitarian states, Churchill's desire to create a supply ministry is a clear indication that he believed war a very real possibility as early as 1936 and wished for England to do all it could to prepare herself. (Churchill's proposal was quashed in *1936 and again in 1938*. Britain's World War II Ministry of Supply was not created until 1939.)

THE OTHER FUNDAMENTAL disagreement between Churchill and Chamberlain before 1938 involved the prospect of an Anglo-Soviet alliance. Churchill had early on established his vehement hatred of communism and of the Soviet Union with his crusade against the Red Army in the immediate postwar years. According to the Conservative MP Leo Amery, however, as early as 1936 Churchill had moved so far in his views as to advocate "continental arrangements that committed us to Russia." His personal feelings on communism being what they were, the fact that Churchill was advocating an Anglo-Soviet alliance in 1936 indicates his recognition that the Nazi Reich was the principal threat to European stability and that the Nazis could not be beaten without the aid of the Soviet Union.

In discussing the possibility of an Anglo-Soviet alliance after Munich, Stewart makes one of the more controversial statements of his book:

> The Poles would [not openly] permit the Red Army to cross their frontier in the event of a German invasion.... This being the case, there never was likely to be any prospect of a deal between Britain, France and the Soviet Union. All expectations to the contrary were the product of wishful thinking.... The problem was that Moscow wanted a deal that was outside London's powers to deliver.

Though Stewart states the above as fact, the feasibility of an Anglo-Soviet alliance before the summer of 1939 has been, and is still, much contested. Churchill at the time believed that a determined Britain had it within its power to "call upon Poland not to place obstacles in the way of a common cause"; and, considering that without British backing the Poles did not stand a chance, this was not an entirely incredible assumption.

Whether or not one believes the above assumption, the fact is that the Chamberlain Cabinet did not make a concerted effort to forge an alliance with the Soviet Union. The reason for its unwillingness to so do is summed up by Stewart, who views Chamberlain's anti-Soviet stance with considerable sympathy: "Ganging up on a police state like Germany with the support of Stalin's Soviet Union was, as Chamberlain fully realized, the pot calling the kettle black." But such reasoning was flawed in its time, and is still flawed. To a farsighted and practical-minded minority in the 1930s, and certainly in retrospect, the imminent threat to European democracy and civil society presented by Hitler far outweighed that presented by Stalin.

As late as April 1939, Chamberlain continued to refer to an Anglo-Soviet alliance as "the only thing we cannot do." This widely held view was myopic and suicidal, and to argue otherwise underestimates the threat that was posed by Hitler. Though Britain and the Soviet Union eventually became allies by default and not through any positive action on Churchill's part, his manifest eagerness to cooperate with Stalin during the prewar years facilitated the ability of the two leaders to cooperate during the war. Had Lord Halifax, the Foreign Secretary whose prewar support for an alliance with the Soviet Union was at best lukewarm, been chosen to lead the War Cabinet instead of Churchill, the inevitable Anglo-Soviet cooperation would doubtless have gone less smoothly. In downplaying the significance of the dispute over the proposed alliance, Stewart ignores the political realities of Europe in the 1930s and discounts Churchill's vision in understanding the necessity of bringing the Soviets on board.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to discount the influence of recent revisionist historians on Stewart's thinking about British politics in the 1930s. In his acknowledgements, Stewart thanks numerous "distinguished historians whose contributions have influenced me," among them John Charmley. In his notorious book, *Churchill, The End of Peace: A Political Biography*, which appeared in 1993, Charmley argued that Churchill's calls for full-scale rearmament were unrealistic in the 1930s, and that Chamberlain and Halifax's caution represented a more prudent realism. He went on to suggest that it might have been more prudent for Britain to have negotiated a peace with Hitler in 1940; but instead, in Charmley's view, Britain ended up the ultimate loser in 1945. In entering into an alliance with the Americans and the Soviets, Britain allowed for the creation of a postwar bipolar balance of power in which it played little part. "In his determination to see Germany defeated," Charmley writes, "Churchill neglected to ask himself, until too late, what the result of the total destruction of German power would be upon the balance of power for which he had fought in the 1930s."

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Outside the Slaughterhouse

Some nights, following the interstate home,
I pull off at the stockyards to hear the drone
of butchering. The floodlight casts shadows
across the catwalk and the feedlot below.
Calves look up from their pens, eyes like polished
stones. In the distance, the Missouri twists
in its bed. This is where my grandfather,
sleepless nights, walked the banks; where water
turned red by sundown. Here, he scooped slit guts,
sawed bones. Here, the river's dull force still cuts.
The moon's crescent curves like a gambrel hook.
Clouds stall like freighted cattle cars. I stoop
to fill my pockets with rocks, cold and worn.
These too were mountains before I was born.

Ted Genoways

In addition to recognizing Charmley, Stewart thanks his "mentor," Alan Clark, who held similar political views, except that he was more vehement in his belief that a negotiated peace in 1940 would have been to Britain's benefit. While a certain amount of reevaluation is necessary to reach anything approaching accuracy in historical narrative, the World War II revisionists have gone so far in their desire to de-mythologize Churchill that they have lost touch with history. To state, as Charmley does, that Britain might have been better off as a Vichy-style vassal state to Nazi Germany amounts to a willful refusal to recognize the realities of the Holocaust, and the social engineering and cultural and political repression of the Third Reich.

To his credit, Stewart does not support the idea of an eleventh-hour deal with Hitler; he does not even support the Munich agreement, though he is understanding and not overly censorious of Chamberlain's actions up to and during the crisis. On the issue of the Soviet Union, however, he certainly does take a revisionist stance, seeing the war as an opportunity for the Soviets to expand into Eastern Europe. In his discussion of the Soviet proposals for a reciprocal defense pact with Britain, he goes so far as to insinuate that the Soviet Union might have had plans to provoke a German attack so as to have an excuse to march its armies westward. This hindsight view of history ignores the fact that the eventual Soviet victory and expansion into Eastern Europe could not have been taken for granted in 1939—or for that matter in 1941, with the Germans outside of Moscow and Leningrad. Had anyone, inside or outside the Soviet Union, dared to suggest in 1939 that the Soviets would not only successfully repel their Nazi attackers but then go on to lead their troops into the heart of Berlin, he or she would not have been believed. And the idea that Stalin was looking for an excuse to go to war with Germany in 1939 is belied by numerous indications that the Soviets signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact in August to avoid doing exactly that.

IV.

Stewart's faulty analysis of the Anglo-Soviet negotiations and his failure to recognize the substantive differences between Churchill's and Chamberlain's rearmament policies are only the most egregious of a long series of analytical misjudgments that recur throughout his book. He wears blinders not only with regard to their policies but also with regard to their personalities. Put simply, Stewart likes Chamberlain and does not much care for Churchill. He sees Chamberlain not as delusional or vain, or power-hungry, but as a dedicated and ultimately disillusioned politician. He quotes extensively and endorsingly from the description of the Prime Minister given by his official biographer, Keith Feiling:

> Masterful, confident, and ruled by an instinct for order, he would give a lead, and perhaps impart an edge, on every question. His approach was arduously careful but his mind, once made up, hard to change; he would make relevance a fundamental and have the future mapped out and under control....

Though Stewart concedes that "there was truth in the charge that his mind ran on rails," that such a mind was "unsuited to adaptation in the face of changed circumstances or of a reality different to that which he first perceived," and that he was "sure of his judgment to an extent that led him to preclude alternate evidence," he finds Chamberlain to be a man with the courage of his convictions, which somehow excuses the fact that many of his convictions were wrong.

According to Stewart, for example, Chamberlain's conviction that Hitler was a man of character and intellect stemmed in large part from the rumor circulated by Hitler's aides that the Führer had been "very favourably impressed" by the British leader. In a letter to his sister written from Munich, Chamberlain gushed that the German dictator had allegedly told his councilors that he had "had a conversation with a man ... and one with whom [I] can do business and he liked the rapidity with which I had grasped the essentials. In short I had established a certain confidence, which was my aim, and in spite of the hardness and ruthlessness I thought I saw in his face I got the impression that here was a man who could be relied upon when he had given his word." Surely there is something truly worrisome about a man entrusted with the leadership of his nation and his civilization who is so easily wooed by the flattery of a madman.

John Colville—who was private secretary to both Churchill and Chamberlain, and whose catty remarks about the former Stewart quotes repeatedly while ignoring his dubious commentary on the latter—wrote of Chamberlain in his journal:

> [His] vanity takes the form of resenting any kind of criticism or mockery.... There is no surer way of gratifying him than to make some allusion to the exceptional importance of his position. In other words, he likes to be set on a pedestal and adored, with suitable humility, by unquestioning admirers.

In addition to being susceptible to flattery, Chamberlain was also a bit of a prig. He disliked modern art, and he disliked socializing. All told, his personality was no more appealing than his foreign policy, and Stewart's affection for the former is as perplexing as is his penchant to forgive the errors of the latter.

Stewart's determination to defend Chamberlain stems perhaps from perversity, perhaps from ideology, perhaps from the perversity of ideology. If Stewart's book were only a reconsideration of Neville Chamberlain, his attitude might be forgivable. But *Burying Caesar* is also an insupportable dismissal of Winston Churchill. While it is true that Churchill may have been stubborn and irrational and uncompromising, he is also one of the great leaders, if not *the* great leader, of modern history. Like his friend and fellow statesman Roosevelt, Churchill had the unique ability to take the people of his country further than they knew they were willing, or even able, to go. Though it is doubtful that without his leadership the British people would have submitted to a negotiated peace with Hitler, it is equally doubtful that their resistance would have been as strong or their determination as fierce. Why rob a terrible century of its truest hero? ■

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NEW YORK DIARIST

Fever

GEORGE W. BUSH, *TIME* magazine's "Person of the Year" for 2000, beware: It's a poisoned chalice. Last year's designee, Jeff Bezos of Amazon.com, has fallen on hard times. In a brutal year for e-commerce, Amazon.com has endured a particularly savage beating. The heretical thought has been uttered: Amazon could go under. Gone are the heady days when "state of the mind" stocks announced the end of the old economy—indeed, dispensed with the very notion of profit itself. The Internet, it would appear, is not for our world what the railroads were for the nineteenth-century economy—it has not changed everything; profit still matters. By *The Wall Street Journal*'s estimates, the peak-to-trough plunge in the NASDAQ from its high-water mark in March 2000 to year's end was a staggering loss of 50 percent, some $3.3 trillion in paper wealth. In a fitting piece of revenge, one of the best IPOs of the year was Krispy Kreme Doughnuts, up 300 percent over its offer price by year's end. We are truly back to the fundamentals.

EVEN A YEAR AGO, IT DID NOT TAKE technological wizardry—or even basic computer skills—to see through the fakery of the Internet boom. A fever had taken hold in the land. We had clicked our way, as if by magic, outside the laws of supply and demand. Financial analysts became gurus, financial-news networks and their celebrities the alchemists of this new culture. The NASDAQ became the measure of all things American, a kind of civic religion. Grandma Jones in Duluth took a stake in Dow Jones. We hailed this new phase of capitalism and asserted, on faith, great gains in productivity. For a moment, Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan questioned whether the gains in productivity were real, but then the fever overwhelmed his doubts. We took the success of the NASDAQ as a vindication of the American way. Pundits taunted the "slower" nations. They had a stark, cruel choice: They could follow our lead, hire our investment banks and underwriters, and scrap their public sectors and old industries; or they would get stampeded by the "electronic herd."

AN ENTIRE INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL economy was legitimized by this American triumphalism. In the words of the Nobel laureate Robert Solow, America was "the cheapest country" among the industrialized economies as measured by the redistribution of wealth. More protective, less brutal capitalisms—in France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden—were declared obsolete. We were doing good and doing well (it is the American way, the insistence that our interests and the moral balance of things naturally intersect). From Kazakhstan to Shanghai, the world was tutored by American investment banks and accounting firms and venture capitalists—and the pundits and cheerleaders who carried their water.

YOU COULDN'T KEEP THEM IN BANGALORE after they heard of the IPOs and wild valuations of Silicon Valley. And we couldn't get enough of the world's techies: the number of H-1B visas (the professional technology visas) was increased from 115,000 to nearly 200,000, and still the industry wanted more. High school students launched businesses and rackets of their own. This was hailed as the spread of entrepreneurial culture and the rise of the "super-empowered" individual. A New Jersey teenager, Jonathan Lebed, showed us the way. He set his books aside to launch an alleged "pump and dump" scheme—buying stocks and talking up their prices on the Internet before dumping his shares for profit. The regulators caught up with Lebed. "I am proud of my son," Lebed's father proclaimed. How could he not be? The world had changed, and his son had mastered its rules.

IN THAT FRENZIED TIME, THE SECURITIES analysts and their investment banks played a decisive role. As Gretchen Morgenson, the gifted financial reporter for *The New York Times*, has revealed, some of these analysts became stars in their own right. Mary Meeker, "Queen of the Internet" at Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, Jack Grubman at Salomon Smith Barney, and Anthony Noto at Goldman Sachs—the three most egregious cases—rose to fame driving up prices of many of the very same companies their own brokerage firms had underwritten and taken public. They reaped huge windfalls—according to some reports, $15 million for Meeker, $20 million for Grubman—but their stock picks were decimated. As in all millenarian moments, the Pied Pipers betrayed those who followed.

THE DESTRUCTION THAT THIS HAS wrought in the American economy has spread to foreign markets. Frankfurt's *Neuer Markt*, Germany's attempt to accommodate the latest technology listings, has fallen by more than 60 percent from its high last March. *Deutsche Borse*, the German stock market operator, has now stepped in to regulate the chaos. In the United Kingdom, the dot-coms fall by the day: The biggest, Boo.com, the much-trumpeted "e-tailer" of sportswear, was the first to go under, last May. Others followed in rapid succession. And they needn't worry in France whether a new company ought to be called *le start-up* or *la jeune pousse*: *Les start-ups* are dying on the vine. In Hong Kong, Richard Li, a boy wonder of the new economy whose Internet start-up, Pacific Century Cyberworks, was something of a cult a year ago, has been humbled. Li had been a great enthusiast of Internet television. But horses couldn't fly, and Li now speaks of the need to "get back to the fundamentals."

FOR THE AMERICAN IMPERIAL ECONOMY, it's time for sobering truths. We have been living beyond our means; our current account deficit is an unprecedented 4.5 percent of GDP. (It was a mere 1.6 percent three years earlier.) We were helping ourselves to the world's savings and the world's goods, blithely assuming that the thing could go on indefinitely. Foreigners were throwing their money at us—flight to quality, it was called—and of $865 billion in worldwide direct foreign investment in 1999, America received $275 billion. In America, the long bull run came at the expense of American personal savings. For the first time since the 1930s, the personal savings rate has been pushed into negative territory. The country went on a consumption spree; the baby-boomers trusted that their savings would come in the unrealistic valuations of the stock market. As the year 2000 drew to a close, the private-sector debt had climbed to an unprecedented 7 percent of GDP. Just as few had paid heed to the crazy valuations, few were willing to grant the current account deficit the attention it deserves. The thing had ceased to matter, we were told. We were Atlas, we were the world's engine (pick your image). We gorged on this narcissism, and the hype itself made the long run possible.

THIS COULD BE LIGHT FARE: IN THE light version, the pretentious pundits would be laughed off and a record of their false predictions hung on public walls. But it is not light fare: There remain those who fell for the hype, multitudes who threw savings at the hucksters and their schemes, impressionable people whose only sin was that very human desire to be part of the New New Thing.

FOUAD AJAMI

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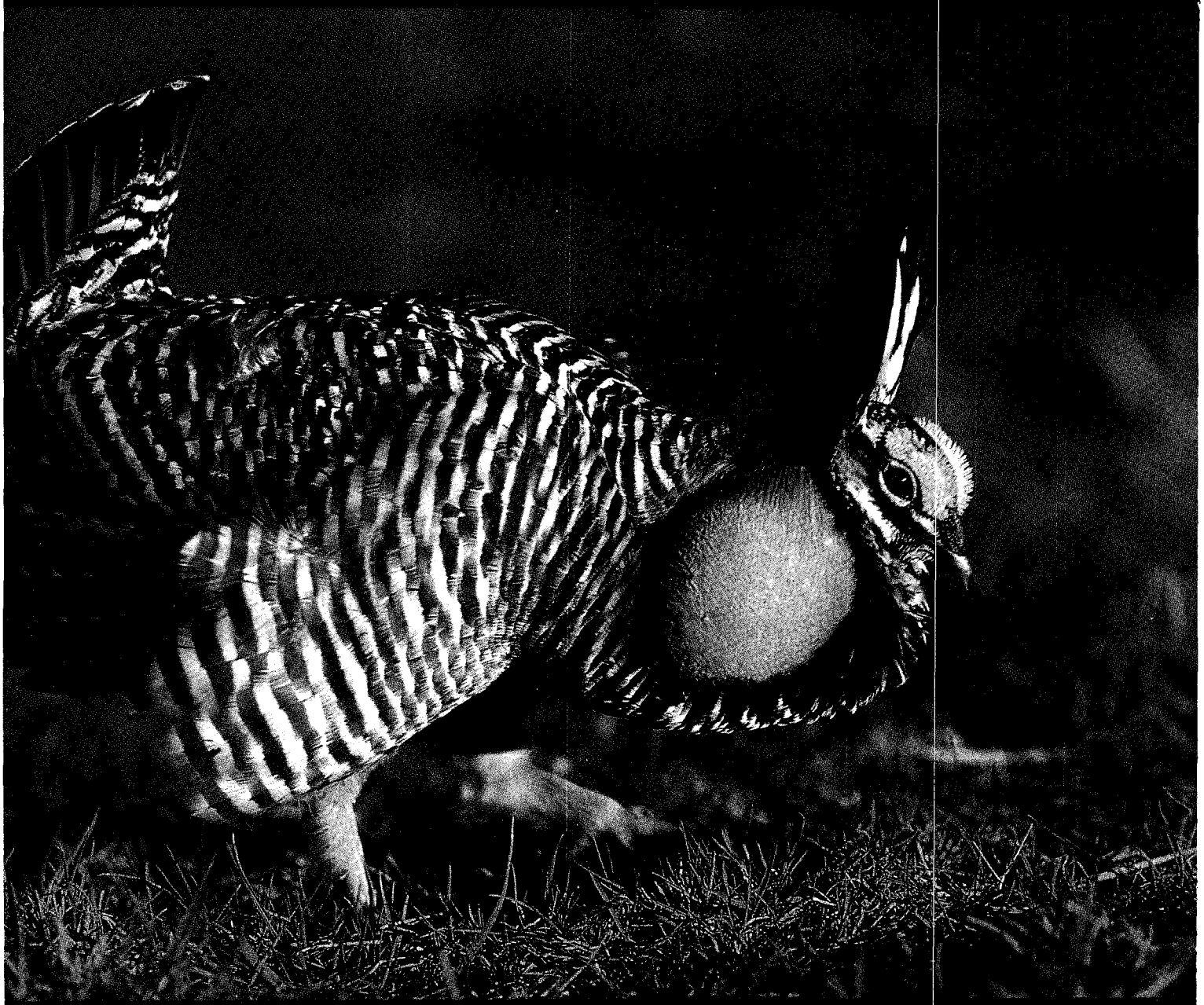
19,500 ACRES IS A LOT OF OPEN SPACE.

ESPECIALLY WHEN YOUR STRIDE IS ONLY TWO INCHES LONG.



The Greater Prairie Chicken is one of several species to benefit from the latest conservation effort by Phillips Petroleum. Together with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Phillips will help restore and manage 19,500 acres in northwestern Missouri, making it a safe haven for high-priority birds. Now breeding populations of Greater Prairie Chickens, Henslow's Sparrows and Bobolinks will have an improved chance of survival. And the finished project will become the first of many bird conservation areas to eventually span the country. It's just one more way Phillips works to improve our world and why we're known as The Performance Company.

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For a copy of our annual report, call 918-661-3700, write to: Phillips Annual Report, B-41, Adams Bldg., Bartlesville, OK 74004, or visit us at www.phillips66.com.

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